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The Epic Songs of Russia.

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THE EPIC SONGS OF RUSSIA

THE EPIC SONGS OF RUSSIA

BY

ISABEL FLORENCE HAPGOOD

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY

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[new ed.]

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TO THE

YOUNGER HEROES

WHO IN THE GREAT WAR AGAINST THE

POWERS OF DARKNESS HAVE PROVED THEMSELVES

THE WORTHY DESCENDANTS

OF THE

BOGATYRS OF OLD

I DEDICATE THIS NEW EDITION OF

THE EPIC SONGS OF THEIR BELOVED FATHERLAND

Isabel F. Hapgood,
New York, August 1915.

TO THE NAMELESS HEROES

MEMORY Eternal, ye Battlers for Russia,
Who for Russian honour made a fort with your breasts!
Your duty done, now in peace ye rest,
And with death a new dawn breaketh fair for you.
And if ye have sinned, await pardon with boldness—
Ye have given your lives to God for the Tzar.
Know this—our first prayer to the Saints is yours ever.
Know this, e'en now to all full pardon is granted.
Your glorious deeds God will never forget.
Memory Eternal, ye Battlers for Russia,
Who for Russian honour made a fort with your breasts!

MEMORY ETERNAL!

(By Moryak. Trans. I. F. H.)

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THESE translations from the wonderful fragments of the Russian epic poetry of the Middle Ages were originally published thirty years ago. The time was too early. In the West, dense ignorance of Russia still prevailed. She was thought of, not as a nation with a great historic past and a still vaster outlook towards the future, but as a mere shapeless mass with no intelligible history and in no vital relation either to the rest of Europe or to the movement of the civilized world. The *Epic Songs* found no large audience either in America or in England; and in England, at least, they have for many years been inaccessible.

Yet to the few who appreciated it, the volume came as a precious gift, and little short of a new revelation. Like another work which, by an interesting coincidence, appeared within the same year, Sir Charles Lyall's *Ancient Arabian Poetry*, it made an epoch; it opened out an undiscovered realm of poetic imagination and achievement. A better and larger understanding, both of Russia and of those Middle Ages out of which, in Russia as elsewhere, the modern world was born, now may —and surely will—secure to the *Epic Songs* something like the admiration and acceptance that they deserve. Miss Hapgood, in giving her consent to this re-issue of her book, speaks to me of its contents as "just as wonderful, just as fascinating, as when I first encountered that goodly fellow-

ship of heroes"; and the feeling must be fully shared by all those to whom, ever since they made its acquaintance, the book has been a treasured possession.

In this issue the author has made a few slight corrections or alterations; but the Songs themselves, as well as the Introduction and Appendix, are substantially unchanged. Of the circumstances in which the *Epic Songs of Russia* are now placed before English readers, of the new spirit in which we now regard the Russian people, the dedication which she has prefixed to this edition may speak sufficiently.

In the original edition of the work the late Professor Francis Child, in a brief preface, bespoke a welcome for it, and expressed his own obligation to the author for her spirited and sympathetic rendering. To that fine scholar, whose classical work on the English and Scottish Ballads gives him a lasting claim on our gratitude, its primary value was in the light it threw on his own studies in popular poetry, and the enlarged scope it gave to a field that he had made peculiarly his own. But the vital and human value of these *Epic Songs* is not so much for the professed student of national tradition and popular art, as for a much larger circle: for those who can still delight in the stories which kindled the imagination of past ages, and who recognize, in these fragments of a vanished world, spiritual kinship with all that poetry, from the *Odyssey* downwards, in which epic magnificence is interwoven with the witchery of romance.

The *Epic Songs* date from a period when the Russian people shared fully in that brilliant resurgence of the human spirit which culminated, in Western Europe, in the thirteenth century. In Russia its progress was violently interrupted. The

Mongol conquest of Southern Russia, and the dismal centuries of dislocation which followed, not only checked the development of the Russian people themselves, but cut them off from the rest of Europe. Only in modern times has the broken union been painfully and partially resumed. Russia is now entering into the full European movement. In literature she has produced, during the nineteenth century, what are perhaps the greatest names of that age throughout the world. But we shall better appreciate, not only the soul of the Russian nation, but even the universal masterpieces of Turgenief or Tolstoi or Dostoievsky, if we know something of the rich soil out of which they sprang. In these Songs, worn down and flawed as they are by many generations of purely oral transmission, the imaginative flame of the Middle Ages still burns clearly. On the leaves of the cypresses that grew by the junction of the two rivers that flowed from the graves of Dunaï and Nastasya was written, "This marvel came to pass for the wonder of all young people and the solace of the old." The words may be taken as a symbol; their spirit is the same as that of Homer's lines, "This the Gods fashioned, and spun destruction for men, that there may be a song even for times to be." And just as they embody the spirit of the epic, so the marvel and mystery of romance are embodied in the words describing the harp-playing of Stavr, "One string he strung from Kief and one from Tzargrad, and the third from far Jerusalem. He played great dances, and sang songs from over the blue sea."

Kief, Constantinople, and Jerusalem all meet and mingle in the Songs, and lands even further, from Normandy to China. Fine Arabian bronze "more precious than gold" (as it is also called in the Old

Testament), silk of Samarcand, Saracen helmets and chain-armour appear alongside of the fabrics and implements of the West. The scarlet ships of the heroes, like the vermilion-prowed galleys of the *Odyssey*, sail wide across perilous seas. The picture of the gorgeous East in the Song of Diuk Stepanovitch has all the splendour of the *Arabian Nights*. But what we feel throughout the Songs is the way in which this wealth of material has been fused by the Russian genius and moulded into its national forms. In the crystal casket of Svyatogor in the wiles of the Tzaritza Solomonida, we recognize the *Thousand and One Nights* and the *Talmud* but both have become Russianized, and have sprung to new life in the process. The forms and motives of romance have taken here a fresh and living embodiment. There are princesses who look out of lattices; kings who, like Arthur at Caerleon or Camelot, hold high feast at Easter in their palaces and such warrior-maidens as reappear, long after, in the adorable figure of Bradamante. The palace built in a night for the Princess Love by Nightingale Budimirovitch has a sun and moon under its golden domes. Heroes meet on the steppe with a background of infinite solitary landscape; at cross-roads in the wilderness there is a white burning stone, and a writing thereon. The figures of youths and maidens on the clasps of Churilo's cloak, that pour green wine or pluck their little harps when his fingers clasp or loop, are a sort of allegory of the magical power of art not merely to interpret but to create life. When Svyatogor cannot lift the wallet of the Villager's Son, though he strains at it until the blood streams down his face, he is told the reason, "The whole weight of the earth lieth therein." This profound Russian mysticism—akin to and yet different from the Celtic—shows itself most

vividly in the strange and seemingly detached incident which (like passages in the contemporary mystical Romance of the Grail) records how "a damsel came forth weeping bitterly, and bearing in her hands the book of the Holy Gospel," and how the mother aurochs tells her children, "That was no damsel weeping, but the city-wall lamenting, for she hath foreseen ill fortune for Kief."

But this mysticism is an undertone in a pattern of life which is large, cheerful and simple. In the Songs there is the clear lyric note of direct passion, as in the lament of Ilya, Greek in its clarity, universal in its human appeal: "O age, old age, like a raven thou hast alighted on my turbulent head, and youth, thou youth, my lovely youth, thou hast flown away like the falcon over the open plain." There is the naïve epic simplicity of narrative and epithet, with its familiar unfailing recurrences, the enrichment of familiar things (the damp earth, the blue sea, the white world) by touches no less vivid because they are customary. There is the epic strength and sanity; the Songs often end on a quiet note of peace: "None of these forty heroes and one ever again roamed the open plain seeking adventures, or stained their white hands with blood. When young Kasyan Mikailovitch came to his own land, he raised a church to Mikola of Mozhaisk, and began to pray constantly to God, and to repent of his sins." There is the rough popular humour shot across the tissue of romantic adventure, breaking out in pithy proverbs like the favourite "Long is a woman's hair, but short is her wit," or Ilya's terse retort to the bragging of Idol, "The priest of Rostof had a cow; she ate and drank until she burst." The "green wine" of the Songs is racy of the soil, generous and strong.

For centuries these poems remained the treasure

of the humble, of peasants and hunters and fisher
men, unknown or neglected by the rest of the world
We welcome them now as a recovered inheritance
In them we pass, as Vladimir and the Princess
Apraxia passed at the leading of Plenko the silk
merchant, to a richly patterned chamber, to another
of crystal and a third of lattice-work, and so to the
golden-domed tower where all is heavenly with sun
and moon, stars innumerable and white dawns
Here is God's plenty, for those who will enter in

J. W. MACKAIL.

October 1915.

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PREFACE

Thorough study of the epic poems of Russia (*bylinas*), as of other branches of folk-lore, is not to be thought of at the present day without the aid of the comparative method, which must begin in the circle of the other Slavic literatures, Bulgarian, Servian, etc.

It has not seemed to me advisable to enter upon so vast a subject in this volume, which is intended for popular reading. I hope that the brief notes in the Appendix will suffice to give a general idea of the historical foundation of the *bylinas*, and of the relationship which exists between them and the epic poems of other nations.

As it is extremely improbable that a complete translation of these Songs will ever be published, a word of explanation is necessary with regard to the method I have pursued.—Of each Song many versions exist, varying in number from three to three dozen or more. Some of these, though mere fragments, contain important facts. Others are rendered inordinately long by the repetition of speeches, the multiplication of details, or the interpolation of passages from other songs. In very few instances is the story complete; and when complete, many characteristic details are lacking. A literal rendering of such a vast and puzzling mass of poems, which are numbered by the hundred, and in their printed form cover thousands of pages, is manifestly impossible. Eclecticism is the

only solution of the difficulty, for the descriptive method conveys no adequate idea of either style or story. I have consulted all the variants. The style I have preserved as nearly as possible, deeming the action sufficiently rapid and forcible to sustain the old-fashioned language. I venture to think that the result would satisfy the peasant-minstrels themselves.

I have simplified the spelling of the proper names as much as possible, and of the very few Russian words employed.

The theory that the epic songs are of purely legendary origin, and not nature myths, is gaining ground. If this view is accepted, the very slight distinction between the Elder and the Younger heroes immediately disappears. It has seemed best, however, to retain that division, since it is customary in Russia and necessary to the proper understanding of any reference to the subject. The mythological explanation will be found interesting from its ingenuity, whichever view may eventually prevail.

For the *bylinas* I am indebted to the Collections of Kirsha Danilef, Sakarof, Rybnikof, Kirveevsky, Bezonof, Hilferding, and the Ethnographical Bulletin of the Natural History Society of Moscow University; for my notes, to works on these Songs by Orest Miller, Schepping, Maikof, Buslaef, Galakof, and other recognized Russian authorities.

ISABEL FLORENCE HAPGOOD.

1885–1915.

THE EPIC SONGS OF RUSSIA

INTRODUCTION

THE highest stage of development reached by popular song is the heroic epos—the rhythmic story of the deeds of national heroes either historical or mythical. In many countries these epics were committed to writing at a very early date. In Western Europe this took place in the Middle Ages, and they are known to the modern world in that form only, their memory having completely died out among the people.

To this rule there are two striking exceptions. At the beginning of the present century the old heroic songs were sung in the Faröe Islands, and that in a much more antique form than is preserved in the later, Middle Age versions. The second exception is still more remarkable. Russia presents the phenomenon of a country where epic song, handed down wholly by oral tradition for nearly a thousand years, is not only flourishing at the present day in certain districts, but even extending into fresh fields.

Amid the vast swamps and forests of Northern Russia the *bylinas*[1] are sung to-day by scores of peasants, men and women, old and young, to whom they have descended through countless generations of ancestors, and whose belief is as

[1] *Bylina*, from *byt*, to be: *i. e.* the story of something which has actually occurred, in contradistinction to the account of a purely imaginary event.

implicit in the *bogatyrs*[1] whose deeds they celebrate as was the belief of the first of those ancestors.

It is only within the present century—within the last twenty-five years, in fact—that the discovery has been made that Russia possesses a national literature which is not excelled by the finest of Western Europe.

About the middle of the last century Kirsha Danilef made a collection of songs among the workmen at the Demidof mines in the Government of Perm. It is not known who this Kirsha Danilef was. An incomplete edition published from his manuscript in 1804 created some interest as a curiosity. In 1818 a more complete edition was issued; and the attention of students having been directed to the subject, various songs were written down by different persons, as occasion offered. A collection was also published in German at Leipzig in 1819, which contained some epic songs not since found. It was left, however, for Petr N. Rybnikof to arouse general attention and enthusiasm. In 1861–2 appeared the first two volumes of his great

[1] The etymology of *bogatyr*, a hero, is uncertain. Some authorities refer it to a word current among various Turko-Mongolian tribes, *bagadour*, *batour*, *bator*, *bagadar*, which is applied to a hero who has thrice penetrated first and alone into the ranks of the enemy. The title is thereafter affixed to his name. But the Mongolians had borrowed the word from the Sanskrit, where it already denoted a person endowed with good luck, a successful person—and success constitutes an inseparable attribute of all heroes. A more purely Russian theory is that which derives it from *bog*, god, through the intermediate form *bogatyi*, rich, as in Latin *dives*, rich, is immediately related to *divus*, godlike, i. e. endowed with an abundance of wonderful powers and gifts. In Little Russia, *bogatyr* is still used to denote a rich man, and sometimes a hero. In the ancient Chronicles, the heroes do not bear the name of *bogatyrs* until 1240, but are called *ryezvetzy*, bold, daring men, or *udaltzy*, braves, the title still applied to the heroes of the Novgorod cycle.

collection made on the shores of Lake Onega. They were greeted with so much amazement and even incredulity, that Rybnikof appended to his third volume a detailed account of his journeyings and of the peasants from whose lips he had written down his songs. The publication of these songs marked an epoch in the literature of Russia.

Petr N. Rybnikof was a government official who was stationed at Petrzavodsk, on the western shore of Lake Onega. Conversing in 1859 with some of the older inhabitants of the town, he learned that many curious and ancient customs, traditions and songs were preserved among the villagers of the Olonetz Government. In confirmation of the statement he was referred to two poems which had been published in the government journals. In the course of that year he succeeded in obtaining some manuscript songs, which had been written down at the dictation of a peasant tailor known as "The Bottle." He then set to work to collect monuments of popular poetry, but at first found only historical and spiritual songs and laments.

In 1860 he was ordered to collect certain statistics, and this afforded him an opportunity to pursue his search among the people themselves. At Shungsk Fair he succeeded, with the aid of the police, in finding a couple of *kalyeky* or psalm-singers, and persuaded them to sing all they knew. As very few of these *kalyeky* sing "worldly songs," i. e. *bylinas*, his hopes were again frustrated. He continued to hear much of "The Bottle," who in the pursuit of his calling roamed over the whole of the trans-Onega region. But although, in search of him, Rybnikof made two journeys across Lake Onega on the ice in severe winter weather, and one in summer in a leaky boat, it was not until 1863 that he succeeded in finding him. Before

this, however, he had heard many an epic song from other singers.

Knowing the distrust with which an official inspires the peasants, he dressed himself like a man of the people, and took passage on a market-boat returning to Pudoga, where "The Bottle" lived. Though it was May, the ice was not out of the lake, and it was bitterly cold. Contrary winds forced them to put in at an island covered with woods and swamps, only twelve versts from their starting-place, after having laboured at the oars all night. The dirty hut of refuge was already crowded with peasants, weather-bound like themselves, so Rybnikof made himself some tea by a fire which was burning in the open air, and lay down on the ground to sleep. He was awakened by strange sounds. About three paces from him sat a group of peasants and an old man with a great white beard, bright eyes, and a kindly expression of countenance. From the old man's lips flowed a wondrous song, unlike any which Rybnikof had ever heard, lively, fantastic, gay, growing now more brisk, again breaking off suddenly, and suggesting in style something very ancient and long forgotten by living men. That song finished, the old man began another—the famous lay of Sadko the Merchant of Novgorod. Thoroughly aroused now, Rybnikof knew that this was his long-sought epic. Many a one did he thereafter listen to, sung by rhapsodists with fine voices and masterly diction, but none of them ever produced upon him the fresh and overwhelming impression made by old Leonty Bogdanovich with his poor, cracked voice and imperfect versions.

Thanks to Bogdanovich, Rybnikof was enabled to find a great number of singers, and to overcome their habitual distrust of *chinovniks* (officials) suffi-

ciently to induce them to sing all the songs they knew. In this manner he succeeded in collecting over 50,000 verses. But this collection was far from exhausting the rich hoards of epic poetry treasured up in the region about Lake Onega. In 1870 Alexander F. Hilferding, impelled by a desire to see something of the peasantry and to hear some of the remarkable rhapsodists described by Rybnikof, undertook a journey to certain districts recommended by the latter. But he did not pause there; penetrating to the North and East of the Olonetz Government, he found, apparently, the very home of epic poetry in the nineteenth century. In less than two months he had made a collection of *bylinas* even larger than Rybnikof's, containing 318 songs.

The region is but little known, and a condition of things prevails which cannot differ much from that of epic days. The peasants on the borders of Lake Onega have a comparatively enviable lot. They have intercourse with St. Petersburg, and are not entirely cut off from the world. But further to the North and East, in Kenozero, Vygozero and Vadlozero, the peasant's lot is hard indeed. There lie forests, swamps, and again forests. The only means of communication between the hamlets which dot this vast wilderness is afforded by the scattered lakes. There are no carts—they cannot be used on the marshy roads; sledges are employed even in summer, or *voloki*—long poles, one end of which is fastened to the horse-collar, while the other end, with board attached to bear the load, drags on the ground. Where water communication is lacking, the peasant must go on horseback, making his own path through the dense forest. The cultivation, with great labour, of tiny clearings in the forest, and fishing in autumn, form

the only means of livelihood, so that all are obliged to add some trade—hunting wild animals, teaming to the White Sea in winter, and so forth. The women and girls work equally hard, and the peasant is happy if, by their united labours, they manage to escape starvation. Oats prepared in various ways form the chief article of food, for they cannot raise either cabbages, onions, cucumbers or buckwheat.

"The condition of things is growing worse," says Hilferding in 1870. Some bureaucrat took it into his head that the interests of the Treasury demanded the preservation of the Northern forests; consequently, the peasants were forbidden to make their little clearings, in spite of the fact that they used only the land which was covered by a stunted growth of birches and alders, and did not touch the valuable wood, for the simple reason that the soil on which grow pines and larches is not fit for crops.

This prohibition has had the curious effect, in one district, of introducing epic songs where they had not been previously known. Agriculture is not favourable to the preservation of epic poetry, the singers coming almost entirely from the ranks of the tailors, shoemakers and net-makers. When, therefore, this community was forced to abandon agriculture, it took to making fine nets—and to learning epic songs.

Two of the causes which have aided in the preservation of epic poetry in these remote districts, long after its disappearance from other parts of Russia, are liberty and loneliness. These people have never been subjected to the oppressions of serfdom, and have never lost the ideal of free power celebrated in the ancient rhapsodies. In these forest fastnesses they have never felt the influences of change—conditions remain as in epic times.

Even education has hardly left a trace. A man who can read and write is very rare.[1] Faith in antiquity and marvels is thus preserved. All the singers and most of their hearers believe implicitly in the *bylinas*, for when doubt enters, epic poetry dies. When Hilferding made the minstrels repeat slowly and with pauses, in order to enable him to write down their songs, they and the peasants present would interpolate remarks which showed their entire faith in the incidents narrated. If, as sometimes happened, a slight doubt was expressed as to whether a hero could wield a club of sixteen hundred pounds (forty *poods*), or annihilate forty thousand men with his own hand, the rhapsodists explained matters very simply: "People were not at all then as they are now."

The singing of the poems is not now a profession, as it was in ancient Greece, in Europe during the Middle Ages, and as it is in Little Russia at the present day, where the *Kobzars* still exist. It has remained a domestic diversion for people whose voices and memories permit them to learn the old songs.

The singing of religious songs or *stiks* is of a professional character, however, and the *kalyeky perekozhie*, or wandering-psalm-singers, mostly blind men or cripples, use it as a means of livelihood.

That there were professional minstrels in Russia in the Middle Ages there can be no doubt. The Chronicles mention them at the Court of Saint Vladimir's grandson. The Church also denounced *skomoroki* (buffoons), fiddlers and players, and the singing of devilish (*i. e.* worldly) songs, before the Tatar conquest. If, as is probable, these "devilish songs" included the epic songs, we may assume

[1] Out of seventy singers, Hilferding found only four or five who could read and write.

that they were not originally composed for the common people, but were sung before the higher classes and the royal body-guard. The manner in which the exploits of the guard are magnified and those of the Prince belittled would seem to indicate that these songs were pre-eminently an entertainment for the body-guard. The minstrels also exercised their art before the Prince—if we can trust the evidence of the poems themselves.[1]

However this may be, the present minstrels all belong to the peasant class, and are nearly all well-to-do, as talent for practical affairs seems to accompany a taste for epic poetry. Many of them would accept nothing from Rybnikof and Hilferding; and when the former offered a kerchief to the daughter of Ryabinin, one of the best singers, the minstrel at once presented an embroidered towel, saying that it was customary for friends to exchange gifts at parting. As an instance of the esteem in which *bylina* singing is regarded by the peasants, it is related of this Ryabinin that his comrades would take turns in doing his share of the work on the fishing-boat, on condition that he should sing to them. The aged bard also, from whom many of the present generation learned their songs, was in the habit of saying when asked to sing: "Give me a *poltina* (half a rouble), and I will sing you a *bylina*." The half rouble was always forthcoming; but he was a very fine singer and the only one who demanded anything from his fellows.

So long as schools and trade do not penetrate to this secluded region, there is no danger of epic poetry dying out. Memory is the chief factor; creative power, which undoubtedly exists (though it is supposed to have become extinct after Peter the Great's day), does not come into play. As a

[1] See "Stavr Godinovich," and "Dobrynya and Alyosha."

an has received his song, so he sings it, with all
ie obsolete words, sometimes quite unintelligible.
asked the definitions of these words, he will
nswer simply, "It is always sung so," unless
ie words chance to be included in his provincial
ocabulary. In this manner have been preserved
etails of nature on the Dnyepr—the "plume
rass," the "open plain," the "aurochs" (now
xtinct), of which the North Russian peasant knows
othing whatever. Yet not a few local touches
re introduced;—the mossy marshes and little
kes over which the hero gallops and picks his
ay, the fitting out of ships and the saddling of
orses, all details dear and familiar to these lake-
wellers, are enlarged upon.

One of the most striking results of local influence
seen in the preservation of the *polyanitza*. This
as become so foreign an idea in the rest of Russia
iat when Rybnikof's first volume was published
ven the savants did not know the meaning of the
ord. It was defined as a "bold fellow who
allops about seeking adventures"; and even
ahl in his great dictionary gives it as "a band of
esperadoes or robbers." But any peasant in
orth-eastern Olonetz will explain that in ancient
mes heroic deeds were performed indifferently
y men and women, the men being called *bogatyrs*
id the women *polyanitzas*.

Fine or poor, all the rhapsodists preserve the
stinct characters in their songs perfectly. Never
ice does Vladimir depart from the rôle assigned
m, of a good-natured, but not always just, ruler;
obrynya is always courteous, Alyosha bold and
inning, Churilo foppish. Thus the story is always
reserved intact. But in spite of the singers'
ssertions that they sing things exactly as they
ave learned them, two men who sing the same

poem, which they have learned from the same person, will tinge it with their own distinct personalities to a marked degree. Thus, with some singers, the heroes are distinguished for their piety; other singers tone down the fiercest speeches in accordance with their own mild dispositions. Some render their songs inordinately long—two or three hours—by the multiplication of details and the repetition of whole passages, in true epic fashion. Yet with all these modifications, which render these ancient songs almost as much a living product of the nineteenth century as of the tenth, each song possesses as distinct a character as any of the epic lays which crystallized into a literary form in the Middle Ages and faded out of the memories of the people.

A regular tonic versification forms one indispensable property of these epic poems; irregularity of versification is a sign of decay, and a complete absence of measure the last stage of decay. The common measure of the *bylina* is trochaic with a dactylic ending, of five or six feet, which with characteristic elasticity can be lengthened to seven or contracted to four. A longer or shorter measure than these is an evidence of decay. The measure varies with the subject to some extent. For example, Ryabinin sang the lay of *Stavr* in trochaic measure with a dactyl, *Mikailo Rover* in pure trochaic, and *Volgá and Mikula* in anapæsts.

The airs to which they are sung, or chanted, are very simple, consisting of but few tones, yet extremely difficult to note down. Each singer has an air of his own (perhaps two), to which he sings all the songs in his repertory, modifying it according to the subject and sentiment, with the greatest skill. Rybnikof and Hilferding often dropped their pens and listened in amazement and admiration to the skill of these untutored minstrels.

It is interesting to trace the different stages of decay in an epic poem ending in the *skazka* (tale).

The epic poem has strictly defined characteristics; names historical or pseudo-historical are given to places and persons, the style is determined, the rhythm fixed within certain limits. A weakening of these characteristics makes of the epic a *bobyvalchina* or *starina* (old tale); further deterioration brings it to the class of *kazacheskiya* (Kazák songs); next comes the class of the *molodyetzkiya* (young men's songs), then the *bezimyaniniya* (nameless songs), then the *skazka* or prose tale. At each step of this descending scale, it loses more and more of the definiteness of time and place as well as the names of the actors, until in the *skazka* all definite rules of construction, all indications of distinct locality, vanish.

The epic songs proper are broadly divisible into three groups : the cycle of Vladimir or Kief, that of Novgorod, and that of Moscow, preceded by three songs of the Elder Heroes. With regard to the first two, and the Kief cycle in particular, authorities on the origin of Russian literature differ widely. One writer endeavours to prove that the Russians, while preserving the traditions common to all Aryan races in their Ceremonial Songs, entirely forgot the common Aryan stock of heroic legends. He assumes that these legends came back to them much later by appropriation from peoples of Turko-Mongolian race, who had become acquainted with epic traditions through Buddhism. This theory is analogous to that propounded by the distinguished Orientalist Benfey, with regard to European tales. According to this view, there is in Russian nothing but the crippled skeleton of foreign tales, to which have been added a few historical and geographical names and psychical

traits furnished to various heroes by over-zealous students, who approached the subject with preconceived notions.

That the epic songs possess a family likeness to the heroic legends of other Aryan races, is not denied by any one; and this likeness is particularly strong in the case of the Rig-Veda, the Ramayana, the Edda and the Celtic epics. But about this epic skeleton, so to speak, a living body has grown up which is as characteristically national as any of those mentioned. The examples cited from Tatar and Mongolian sources by the author of the theory above referred to, are in most cases extremely far-fetched. His views have been combated by distinguished students of comparative mythology, and this wholesale appropriation from Eastern myths cannot be regarded as established. A comparison of these epic songs with the ancient Chronicles shows that the heroes are thoroughly Russian, and that the pictures of manners and customs which they present are valuable for their accuracy.

The point of departure for the mythologies of all Aryan races must be sought in the phenomena of Nature. These were first personified as gods, and when each of these gods became divided into two or more individuals, according to their various attributes, these attributes, now entirely independent personages, were called the sons and grandsons of the gods. The localization of these Nature-myths began in heathen times. They were attached to various places, historical events and persons. With the introduction of Christianity this localization became more decided, and the ancient objects of worship were transformed, now into heroes, again into house demons or sorcerers, and fell under the ban as evil spirits or were merged with the new saints.

Prince Vladimir Svyatoslavich introduced Chris-ianity into Russia in 988. It was not only stablished as the State religion, but the people, at 'ladimir's command, accepted the new faith, ermitted their idols to be destroyed and them-elves to be baptized by thousands forthwith. hough they had idols representing the powers of Nature which they worshipped, there were neither emples nor priests to interfere with this summary hange. But their old beliefs could not be so eadily set aside, and finding themselves thus pro-ided with two faiths, they solved the difficulty n the most natural manner—by subjecting their eathen gods to baptism also. Thus, for instance, erun the Thunderer became Ilya (Elijah) the rophet, the hero Ilya of Murom of the Songs. his furnishes the key to the cycle of Vladimir, nd shows how the epithet "two-faithed," often pplied to the Russian people by their old writers, as earned.

Side by side with the cycle of Vladimir and the eroes of Kief, and sung by the same rhapsodists, ourishes the Novgorod cycle, with its Braves *udaltzy*). Much more restricted than either the Kief or the Moscow cycle, it consists practically of ut two songs.

Novgorod was one of the greatest cities of the orth, a Slavic Venice, long before the other Russian owns had emerged from obscurity. It had ex-ensive commercial relations with Western Europe nd the Orient, and of this feature of Novgorod he Great, *Sadko the Merchant* is the epic represen-ative. Of the perpetual war waged against the houds, Scandinavians and other tribes, no trace emains in the songs which survive; but the emory of the civil war which raged between the atricians and the common people, between the

two quarters of the town separated by the Volkof, is perpetuated in the song of *Vasily Buslaevich.*

This cycle is not so rich in the ancient poetry of the Elements as the Kief cycle, and compared with that, it is far more definite, practical and closer to history.

In the two cycles already considered, the heroic epos, the historical fate of the people is reflected in its most salient features and essential spirit. But there exist among the people epic songs which are more justly entitled to the general appellation bestowed upon all similar productions, *bylinas*—records of what has been. The actors in these songs are connected with well-defined epochs, with real events, and not only bear historic names like the heroes of the Kief and Novgorod cycles, but frequently perform the feats assigned to them by history.

Epic marvels have not wholly disappeared from these songs of what is termed the Moscow or Imperial cycle, and at times heroic, supernatural feats are narrated, evidently copied from the earlier cycles. These Moscow songs are inferior in force, and approach in style the "Old" or "Nameless Songs." The pre-Tatar period is not represented, and the cycle proper begins with Ivan the Terrible; and ends with the reign of Peter the Great, when the power of composing epic songs is supposed to have disappeared. Ivan and Peter are the most prominent figures. As the period extending from the Kief cycle to Ivan is not rich in song, so likewise there is a great gap of a hundred years before Peter the Great, in which the songs are in no way remarkable, notwithstanding the many striking events which would seem to have afforded fitting subjects for the popular muse.

Fantastic as are some of the adventures in these

ngs, there is always a solid historical foundation. ıe same process which unites (Saint) Vladimir yatoslavich and Vladimir Monomachus in one rson is pursued with Ivan the Terrible. To is much-married Tzar are attributed many deeds his grandfather Ivan III (his father being nored), and other persons; and he is always presented in a rather favourable light. The con- est of Siberia, the taking of Kazan and Astrakhan, e wars against Poland, the Tatars of the Crimea, c., are the principal points about which are ouped the songs referring to Ivan's reign.

Richard James, Almoner to the English Embassy Moscow in 1619, only fourteen years after the ief reign of the False Dmitry, noted down many the songs which were already current upon that ent, and another collection of contemporary lays as made by Kalaidovich in 1688. These are e first instances of the Russian national songs ing reduced to writing. Many of those noted James are reprinted in P. V. Kiryeevsky's great ork in six volumes, which is very rich in songs of e Moscow cycle.

The epic Peter the Great bears but a faint resem- ance to the historical Peter. His wars offered ıe subjects for the singers, but they incorporated any a detail from the ancient myths of Dobrynya e Dragon Slayer and Ilya of Murom in their songs out the battle of Poltava.

The composition of epic poetry did not entirely ase until after the French invasion of 1812; ough the songs of that epoch are much inferior those of the ancient days, are utterly devoid poetry, and merit attention only as curious ementoes of the times. A more detailed account the Moscow cycle is unnecessary, as it will not represented in this volume. Its methods can be

observed in the songs of the semi-mythical epoch, where they appear at their best. These poems are sung in the same regions as those of the first two cycles, and also to a greater extent than the latter in the central Governments of Tula and Saratof.

In support of the theory that the poems of the Vladimir and Novgorod cycles were not original creations but derived from Turko-Mongolian sources, its advocates point to the fact that in the Government of Kief and Southern Russia, where they should have originated if of Russian composition, none are now to be heard, while in Siberia and the Governments of Arkhangel, Simbirsk, Perm, Olonetz (especially the latter), on the Don, and at the mouths of the Volga, they abound. This, they claim, proves that the epic songs came from the wandering hordes of Siberia. A more simple and natural explanation of this phenomenon is furnished by the history of the Kief region.

The lays of Vladimir were composed in the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries. There are several reasons for assigning them to this epoch. They all represent Russia as Christian, united under the rule of Vladimir, and in constant (generally hostile) contact with the Tatars. The action is almost exclusively confined to Kief or its environs, and among the other towns mentioned (all belonging to the Kief epoch) Moscow is not included. This confines them between the limits of 988 (when Christianity was introduced by Vladimir Svyatoslavich) and 1147, when Moscow first appears in the Chronicles, Yury the son of Vladimir Monomachus having built the first houses on the present site of the Kremlin. Most of the heroes are, moreover, mentioned in the Chronicles, and none of them can have lived later than the beginning of the thirteenth century.

Further proof is furnished by the "Word of gor's Expedition"[1] (*Slova o plkou Igorevye*), ussia's famous written epic poem and the only ne which was committed to writing earlier than e seventeenth century. In 1185, Igor, Prince f Novgorod-Syeversky, undertook a campaign of taliation against the Polovtzy, a nomad tribe f Turko-Finnish extraction living on the shores f the Don. This poem, which is founded on that xpedition, bears internal evidence of having been mposed during the lifetime of the principal actors the drama. It is supposed to have been com- itted to writing in the fourteenth or fifteenth entury. The unknown author announces in the rst lines his intention of singing in the "present yle"—the style of the *bylinas*—"and not in iat of Boyan," evidently a poet of repute at that me. This shows that these songs were in vogue s early as 1185. As the only epic poem which as been transmitted to us in writing, the "Word" of the greatest value and interest, but it differs radically from the *bylinas* (in spite of the author's tention) that it lies without the scope of the resent work.

The epic songs are the work of the people alone; ey present no traces of individual character, their eroes are more mythical than historical. The Word," on the other hand, is the work of a poet, ho has succeeded in colouring it strongly with his n personality; its heroes are simple men, with trace of the supernatural, the event chronicled historical, and the poem forms an organic whole. the songs layers of poetry as well as of history

[1] The original manuscript discovered in 1795 was destroyed the burning of Moscow in 1812. A MS. copy preserved among e papers of Catherine II, and the text printed from the original 1800, alone survive.

are discernible, and it has been suggested that a system of poetical palaeontology might be applied to them.

There seems thus to be sufficient ground for assuming that the songs of the Kief cycle (and those of the Elder Heroes) were already in existence when, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, Vladimir and Yaroslavl were founded, and the great movement of the South Russian population towards the North and the East began. This movement continued to increase, particularly during the twelfth century, when the seat of empire was removed to Vladimir. It is easy to see how the songs would be carried by this emigrating population from the South to the points which became later the centre of Great Russia; and how, still later, the development of new needs and forms of life in the Russia of Moscow removed the Kief songs to the borders of the country, together with other relics of antiquity.

The devastation of Southern Russia by the Tatars in the thirteenth century, and the decay of its civilization under the Lithuanian sway in the fourteenth and fifteenth, obliterated these poems from popular memory. When, in the sixteenth century, the population of Southern Russia organized itself anew in the forms of the Kazák communes, it fabricated for itself a fresh cycle of epic legends, which finally replaced those of Kief. Thus, in Little Russia, where they originated, these epic songs are sung no longer, though a dim hint or a name may be found now and then in the Ceremonial Songs, and the *Kobzars*[1] celebrate the deed of a new race of Kazák heroes.

[1] Professional minstrels who accompany their songs on the *kobza* or *bandura*, a twelve-stringed instrument, resembling a mandolin in shape.

ut in the lonely wildernesses of the North-east,
here circumstances have called forth no great
warlike deeds, the ancient paladins of Prince
adimir's court have no rivals, and the emigrants
ve cherished the songs and legends which recall
eir fair Southern home of yore.

This progress of the epic poems ever further
wards the North, recalls the famous migration
the Norse epos to Iceland, where it was committed
writing in the Middle Ages, affords a reasonable
planation of the present home of epic song, and
nders the Siberian theory superflous.

THE ELDER HEROES

EPIC SONGS OF RUSSIA

Volgá Vseslavich the Wizard

THE red sun sank behind the lofty mountains, behind the broad sea, stars studded the clear heavens; then Volgá Vseslavich was born in Holy Mother Russia, the son of Marfa Vseslavievna and a Dragon.

Mother Earth trembled, the wild beasts fled to the forests, the birds flew up to the clouds, and the fish in the blue sea scattered. At an hour and a half old, Volgá spoke thus to his lady mother: "Swathe me not in cocoon-like bands, neither gird me about with silken bonds. But swathe me, mother mine, in strong steel mail; on my head set a helm of gold; in my right hand put a mace, a heavy mace of lead, in weight three hundred poods." [1]

In due course Lord Volgá learned all wisdom and all cunning, and divers tongues. When he attained to fifteen years [2] he collected a body-guard, bold and good—thirty heroes, save one; and he himself was the thirtieth. To them Lord Volgá spoke:

[1] A pood is about forty pounds.

[2] In some versions, *twelve* years, the epic age of martial maturity.

"Good and brave druzhina[1] mine! listen to your ataman.[2] Weave snares of silk, spread them on the damp earth, amid the dusky forest, and take martens, foxes, wild beasts and black sables for the space of three days and three nights."

His good body-guard hearkened to their elder brother, to their chief, and did the thing commanded: but no single beast could they take. Then Lord Volgá transformed himself into a lion, and trotted over the damp earth to the gloomy forest, headed off the martens, foxes, the wild beasts and black sables, the far-leaping hares and little ermines, capturing as many as he would.

Again, on a day, Lord Volgá was in Kief town with his nine and twenty heroes; and he said to them:

"Good my body-guard! twine now mighty cords. Make them fast to the topmost crests of the trees in the dark forest; and catch therewith geese, swans, clear falcons, and little birds of all the various sorts. And this ye shall do for the space of three days and nights."

And when they did so, and caught nothing, Lord Volgá turned himself into an ostrich-bird, and turned all back, geese, swans, clear falcons and lesser birds.

Again he ordered his good body-guard to take axes of stout metal, and build oaken vessels, and to knot silken nets, wherewith to take salmon, dolphins, pikes, flat fish and precious sturgeons, for three days and as many nights. And when they could not, he transformed himself into a pike, and drove all the fishes back.

And being again in Kief town, with his body-

[1] From *drug*, a friend; a body-guard where all were like brothers. See Appendix: *Volgá Vseslavich.*

[2] Hetman, Kazák chief.

guard, Lord Volgá spoke: "Brave and good druzhina mine! Whom shall we send to the Turkish land, to learn the Tzar's mind,—what the Tzar thinketh, whether he meaneth to come against Holy Russia? If we send an old man, there will be long to wait; if a young one, he will sport with the maidens, he will divert himself with the young damsels, and hold converse with the old crones, and so also we shall have long to wait. Plain is it then that Volgá himself must go."

Then Volgá became a little bird, and flew above the earth, and came speedily to the Turkish land. There he alighted over against the Tzar's little window, and listened to the secret talk between the Tzar and his Tzaritza.

"Aï, my Tzaritza, Pantalovna! I know what I know. In Russia the grass groweth not as of yore, the flowers bloom not as of old; plainly, Volgá is no longer among the living."

To this the Tzaritza Pantalovna made answer:

"And thou my Tzar, thou Turkish Santal! the grass still groweth as of yore in Russia, and the flowers blossom as was their wont. Last night and in my dreams I saw a little titmouse fly from the East, and from the West a black raven. They flew against each other in the open plain, and fought. The little bird tore the black raven asunder, and plucked out his feathers, and scattered all to the winds."

Then Tzar Santal the Turk made answer: "I am minded to march against Holy Russia shortly. Nine cities will I take and bestow upon my nine sons, and for myself I will fetch a rich furred cloak."

"Thou shalt never take nine cities," quoth Pantalovna, "for thy nine sons, nor shalt thou fetch for thyself a rich furred cloak."

"Thou old devil!" spake Tzar Santal the Turk, "thou hast but slept and dreamed."

Therewith he smote her upon her white face, and, turning, smote the other cheek, and flung the Tzaritza upon the floor of brick; and yet a second time he flung her.

"Nay, but I shall go to Holy Russia!" quoth he, "and I shall take nine cities for my nine sons, and a rich furred cloak for my own wearing."

Then Lord Volgá Vseslavich transformed himself to a little ermine, crept into the armoury, turned back into a goodly youth, snapped the stout bows, broke the silken cords, all the fiery arrows, and the locks upon the weapons, and drenched all the powder in the casks. Again Lord Volgá turned himself into a gray wolf, and galloped to the stable, and tore open the throats of all the good steeds therein. When that was done, Lord Volgá flew back to Kief town, to his good body-guard, in the form of a little bird.

"Let us go now, my bold, good guards, to the Turkish land," he said.

So they rode thither, and took all the Turkish host captive.

"Let us now divide the prisoners," quoth Lord Volgá. What lot was dear, and what was cheap? Sharp swords were rated at five roubles, weapons of damascened steel at six roubles: and but one lot was exceeding cheap—the women. Old women were valued at a quarter of a kopek, young women at half a kopek, and beauties at a copper farthing.

Volgá and Mikula Selyaninovich the Villager's Son [1]

COURTEOUS Prince Vladimir, of royal Kief town, gave to his beloved nephew Volgá, three cities, Kurtzovetz, Oryekovetz, and a third, Krestyanovetz. For Volgá had traversed many lands, many hordes; he had collected gifts in tribute from all Tzars and kings, and had brought them to glorious Kief town, to his uncle, Prince Vladimir. Much gold had he collected and silver and great pearls, and yet more of Arabian bronze, which darkeneth never, nor corrodeth, and is more precious than gold or pearls or silver.

Now, in those three glorious cities given him by his uncle Vladimir, dwelt stiff-necked people, who obeyed no man, neither gave gifts nor tribute to any. Then young Volgá Vseslavich assembled his good body-guard, and set out to take possession of his towns. As they rode over the open plain, Volgá heard a husbandman ploughing. The plough screamed, the share grated against the stones. Volgá rode in quest of the husbandman. A whole day he rode until evening, and heard the plough grate ever through the plain; but dark night overtook him on the way, and he found not the man. A second day he rode toward that husbandman

[1] See Appendix for mythological signification, etc.

until dusk, and yet a third; and on the third day he came upon the man driving his plough, and casting the clods of earth from side to side of the furrow. The husbandman ploughed up damp oaks, stumps and great stones; and his nightingale mare was named "Raise-her-head;" for she could lift it to the clouds. His plough was of maple-wood, his reins of silk, the share of damascened steel with fittings of silver, and the handles of pure gold. His curls waved over his brows of blackest sable, his eyes were falcon clear; his shoes were of green morocco with pointed toes; and under the hollow of his foot, sparrows might fly. His hat was downy, and his caftan was of black velvet.

Lord Volgá spoke these words: "God aid thee, husbandman, in thy ploughing and tilling!"

"Art thou come, Volgá Vseslavich, with thy troop?" answered the husbandman. "Ridest thou far, Volgá? Whither leadeth thy course, with thy good guard?"

"I go to take possession of three towns which courteous Prince Vladimir, my uncle, hath given to me, Kurtzovetz, Oryekovetz, and Krestyanovetz."

"Ho, Volgá Vseslavich! Robbers dwell there. Two days ago I was in that town, bearing two sacks of salt, of a hundred poods each, upon my nightingale mare, and they demanded toll; and for all I gave them they would still have more. Then I began to thrust them back by thousands; he who was standing is now sitting, he who was sitting now lieth, and he who then lay will stand no more for ever." [1]

[1] Something resembling this occurs in *Doon de Mayence*. Doon, who has been reared far from men, does not even know the meaning of money, and when the ferryman demands toll, he pays his way with blows.

Then spoke Volgá : " Husbandman ! come thou with me as my comrade."

The husbandman at that loosed the silken reins, turned his mare from the plough and mounted the good steed, and they rode forth.

But the husbandman soon paused in thought.

" Ho there, Volgá ! " quoth he; " I have left my plough in the furrow. Command now thy men to turn it from the furrow, scrape the soil from the share, and cast it into a willow bush, that robbers find it not, that none discover it save those to whom it will yield service,—my brother peasants."

So Volgá despatched five of his mighty youths, and they twisted the handles all about, but could not draw that plough of maple-wood from the furrow.

Then Volgá sent thither ten men, and again his whole body-guard; but the strength of them all was not enough to loose the share, shake off the earth and toss it into the willow bush.

Then the husbandman rode up on his nightingale mare, grasped the plough of maple-wood with one hand, shook the soil from the share, tossed it to the clouds, saying :

" Farewell my plough ! Never more shall I till with thee."

Then they mounted their good steeds and rode, and came to the famous town of Kurtzovetz, to Oryekovetz, and to the little burgh of Krestyanovetz.

Thereupon the common folk assembled in throngs and gave them great battle. And those peasants were very cunning rogues. They reared a treacherous bridge. But the youthful heroes were yet more cunning, and first sent forward their great force upon that bridge of staffwood. Then the bridge broke, and all that host fell into the little

river, and began to drown and to be in sorry plight. Volgá and the husbandman urged their good steeds across that little stream, the Volkof, and the brave chargers leaped it. Then they began to do honour to the peasants, to give them due guerdon and to lash them with their whips. And when they had chastised these peasants at their good pleasure, they rode back whence they came.

And the peasants began to be submissive from that hour, and to pay their just tribute.

The husbandman rode in front, and Volgá essayed to overtake him; yet spur on as he would, he could barely keep in sight. Raise-her-head's tail spread far abroad, her mane waved in the breeze, and she went at a walk; but Volgá's horse galloped at full speed. Raise-her-head paced, and Volgá's steed was left far behind. Then Volgá waved his cap and shouted. When the husbandman perceived it, he restrained his nightingale mare, the while Volgá spoke thus:

"Halt, thou husbandman! If that mare were but a stallion, I would give for her five hundred roubles."

"Thou art but foolish, Volgá," the husbandman made answer: "I bought this mare as a foal from her mother's side for five hundred roubles; and were she a stallion she would be priceless."

"By what name art thou called, husbandman, and what is thy patronymic?" asked Volgá.

"Now ho, thou Volgá Vseslavich!" the husbandman made answer; "I will plough for rye and stack it in ricks, I will draw it home and thresh it, brew beer and give the peasants to drink:—and the peasants shall call me Young Mikula Selyaninovich, the Villager's Son."

Hero Svyatogor [1]

HERO SVYATOGOR saddled his good steed, and made ready to ride afield. As he traversed the open plain, he found none with whom to measure the strength which flowed so fiercely through his veins. Weighed down with might, as with a heavy burden, he spoke:

"Would there were a ring fixed in the heavens —I would drag them down! If there were but a pillar firm set in damp mother earth, and a ring made fast thereto, I would raise the whole earth and twist it round!"

And as he went his way over the wide steppe, he was aware of a traveller there, and rode after him, but could by no means overtake him. He rode at a trot, and the wayfarer was ever before him;—at full gallop, and the man still went on before. Then cried the hero:

"Ho there, thou wayfarer! pause a little, for I cannot overtake thee on my good steed."

So the wayfarer halted, took a small pair of pouches from his shoulder and cast them on the damp earth.

"What hast thou in thy pouches?" said Svyatogor.

"Lift them from the earth, and thou shalt see," quoth the man.

[1] See Appendix: *Svyatogor.*

Then Svyatogor sprang from his good steed, and seized the pouches with one hand,—and could not raise them. Then he essayed both hands;—a breath alone could pass beneath, but the hero was sunk to his knees in the earth, and blood, not tears, streamed down his white face.

"What lieth in thy wallet?" said Svyatogor then. "Lo! my strength hath not begun to fail me, yet I cannot lift this weight."

"The whole weight of the earth lieth therein," the man made answer.

"And who art thou? What art thou called, and what is thy patronymic?"

"I am Mikulushka[1] Selyaninovich, the Villager's Son."

"Tell me then, Mikulushka, inform me, how I may know the fate decreed by God?"

"Ride on the straight way, until thou come to the fork of the road. At the parting of the way, turn to thy left hand, send thy horse at full speed, and thou shalt come to the Northern Mountains. In those mountains, beneath a great tree, standeth a smithy; and of the smith therein do thou inquire thy fate."

Then Svyatogor rode three days as he had been commanded, and so came to the great tree and the smithy, where stood the smith forging two fine hairs.

Quoth the hero: "What forgest thou, smith?" The smith made answer: "I forge the fates of those that shall wed."

"And whom shall I wed?"

"Thy bride is in the kingdom by the sea, in the royal city; thirty years hath she lain on the dungheap."

Then the hero stood and thought: "Nay: but

[1] *Ushka* is the diminutive termination.

I will go to that kingdom by the sea, and will slay my bride."

So he went to the royal city of that kingdom by the sea, and came to a miserable hut and entered. No one was there save a maiden lying on the dung-heap; and her body was like the bark of fir-trees. Svyatogor drew forth five hundred roubles, and laid them on the table, and with his sharp sword, he smote her on her white breast. Then he departed from that kingdom, and the maiden woke and gazed about her. The fir-bark fell from her limbs, and she became a beauty such as was never seen in all the world nor heard of in the white world.

On the table lay the five hundred roubles, and with this money she began to trade. When she had accumulated untold treasure of gold, she built dark red ships, freighted them with precious wares and sailed forth upon the glorious blue sea. And when she was come to the great city, to the Holy Mountains, and began to barter her precious wares, the fame of her beauty spread through all the town and kingdom, and all men came to look upon her and marvel at her fairness. Hero Svyatogor came also to gaze upon her beauty—and loved her, and began to woo her for himself.

After they were married, he perceived a scar upon his wife's white bosom, and inquired of her: "What scar is that?"

And his wife made answer: "An unknown man came to our kingdom by the sea, and left five hundred roubles of gold in our hut. When I awoke, there was a scar upon my bosom, and the fir-bark had fallen away from my white body. For before that day, I had lain for thirty years upon the dungheap."

Then Svyatogor the hero knew that none may escape his fate, nor may any flee upon his good steed from the judgment of God.

THE CYCLE OF VLADIMIR, OR OF KIEF

Ilya of Murom the Peasant Hero, and Hero Svyatogor

IN the hamlet of Karacharof, by Murom town, dwelt Ilya [1] the Old Kazák. Thirty years he sat upon the oven, having use of neither arms nor legs, because of his grandfather's sin.

And when thirty years were past, in summer, at the time of haying, his father and mother went forth to clear the forest-girdled meadows, and left Ilya alone in the cottage. Then there came to him three wayfarers—Christ and two of his apostles, in the guise of poor brethren, strolling psalm-singers, and besought him that he would give them to drink.

"Alas! ye wayfarers, aged men, dear friends!" said Ilya; "full gladly would I give you to drink: but I cannot rise, and there is none in the cottage with me."

And the men made answer: "Arise, and wash thyself; so shalt thou walk and fetch us drink."

Then he arose and walked; and having filled a cup with kvas,[2] brought it to the aged men. They received it, drank, and gave it again to Ilya, saying:

"Drink now after us, Ilya, son of Ivan." When

[1] For historical and mythological points, see Appendix: *Ilya of Murom.*

[2] A sourish liquor made from rye-meal.

he had drunk, the old men said: "How is thy strength now, Ilya?"

Ilya answered: "I thank you humbly, ye aged men. I feel a very great strength within me, so that I could even move the earth."

Then the men looked each upon the other, and said: "Give us to drink yet again." And Ilya did so. And when they had drunk, they gave the cup to him the second time, and inquired: "How is it with thee now, Ilya?"

"The strength I feel is very great," said Ilya, "yet but as half the former strength."

"Thus let it be," spoke the men: "for if we give thee more, mother earth will not bear thee up." And they said: "Go forth now, Ilya."

So Ilya set his cup upon the table, and went forth into the street with all ease; and the aged men said:

"God hath blessed thee, Ilya, with this strength of His. Therefore, defend thou the Christian faith, fight against all infidel hosts, bold warriors and daring heroes, for it is written that death shall not come to thee in battle. Stronger than thee there is none in the white world, save only Volgá, (and he will take thee not by might but by craft), and Svyatogor, and, stronger yet, beloved of damp mother earth, Mikula Selyaninovich, the Villager's Son. Against these three contend thou not. Live not at home,—labour not; but go thou to royal Kief town." And therewith the men vanished.

Then Ilya went forth to his father, in the clearing, and found him with his wife and labourers reposing from their toil. He grasped their axes and began to hew; and what his father with the labourers could not have done in three days, that Ilya achieved in the space of one hour. Having thus felled a whole field of timber, he drove the

axes deep into a stump, whence no man could draw them.

When his father with wife and labourers woke, and beheld the axes, they marvelled, saying: "Who hath done this?" Then came Ilya from the forest, and drew the axes from the stump; and his father gave thanks to God that his son should be so famous a workman.

But Ilya strode far over the open plain; and as he went, he beheld a peasant leading a shaggy brown foal, the first he had seen. What the peasant demanded for the foal, that Ilya paid. For the space of three months, he tied the foal in the stall, feeding it with the finest white Turkish wheat, and watering it from the pure spring. After these months were past, he bound the foal for three nights in the garden, anointing it with three dews. When that was done, he led the foal to the lofty paling, and the good brown began to leap from side to side, and was able to sustain Ilya's vast weight; for he had become a heroic steed. All this Ilya did according to the commands of the aged psalm-singers who had healed him.

Then Ilya saddled his good steed Cloudfall, prostrated himself, and received the farewell blessing of father and mother, and rode forth far over the open plain.

As he rode, he came to a pavilion of white linen, pitched under a damp oak; and therein was a heroic bed, not small, for the length of the bed was ten fathoms, and the breadth six fathoms. So he bound his good steed to the damp oak, stretched himself upon that heroic bed and fell asleep. And his heroic slumber was very deep; three days and nights he slept. On the third day, good Cloudfall heard a mighty clamour toward the North. Damp

mother earth rocked, the dark forests staggered the rivers overflowed their steep banks. Then th good steed beat upon the earth with his hoof, bu could not wake Ilya, and he shouted with huma voice:

"Ho there, Ilya of Murom! Thou sleepes there and takest thine ease, and knowest not th ill fortune that hangeth over thee. Hero Svya togor cometh to this his pavilion. Loose me now in the open plain, and climb thou upon the dam oak."

Then sprang Ilya to his nimble feet, loosed hi horse and climbed into the damp oak.

And lo! a hero approached; taller than th standing woods was he, and his head rested upo the flying clouds. Upon his shoulder he bare casket of crystal, which, when he was come to th oak, he set upon the ground and opened with golden key. Out of it stepped his heroic wife in all the white world, no such beauty was eve seen or heard of; lofty was her stature and daint her walk; her eyes were as those of the clea falcon, her brows of blackest sable, and her whit body was beyond compare.

When she was come forth from the crysta casket, she placed a table, laid a fair cloth thereo and set sugar viands; and from the casket, sh also drew forth mead for drink. So they feaste and made merry. And when Svyatogor had we eaten, he went into the pavilion and fell asleep.

But his fair heroic wife roamed about the ope plain, and so walking, espied Ilya upon the dam oak.

"Come down now, thou good and statel youth," she cried: "descend from that dam oak, else will I waken Hero Svyatogor and mak great complaint of thy discourtesy to me."

Ilya could not contend against the woman, and so slipped down from the oak as she had commanded.

And after a space, that fair heroic woman took Ilya and put him in her husband's deep pocket, and roused the hero from his heavy sleep. Then Svyatogor put his wife in the crystal casket again, locked it with his golden key, mounted his good steed, and rode his way to the Holy Mountains.

After a little, his good steed began to stumble, and the hero to beat him upon his stout flanks with a silken whip. Then said the horse in human speech :

" Hitherto I have borne the hero and his heroic wife; but now I bear the heroic woman and two heroes. Is it a marvel that I stumble? "

Thereupon Hero Svyatogor drew Ilya from his deep pocket, and began to question him :—who he was and how he came in the pocket. And Ilya told him all the truth. When he heard it, Svyatogor slew his faithless heroic wife; but with Ilya he exchanged crosses, and called him his younger brother.

And as they talked together, Ilya said : " Full gladly would I see Svyatogor that great hero; but he rideth not now upon damp mother earth, nor appeareth among our company of heroes."

" I am he," quoth Svyatogor. " Gladly would I ride among you, but damp mother earth would not bear me up. And furthermore, I may not ride in Holy Russia, but only on the lofty hills, and steep precipices. Let us now ride among the crags, and come thou to the Holy Mountains with me."

Thus they rode long together, diverting themselves; and Svyatogor taught Ilya all heroic customs and traditions.

On the way, Svyatogor said to Ilya : " When we

shall come to my dwelling, and I shall lead thee to my father, heat a bit of iron, but give him not thy hand."

So when they were come to the Holy Mountains, to the palace of white stone, Svyatogor's aged father cried:

"Aï, my dear child! Hast thou been afield?"

"I have been in Holy Russia, father."

"What hast thou seen and heard there?"

"Nothing have I seen or heard in Holy Russia but I have brought with me thence a hero." The old man was blind, and so said:

"Bring hither the Russian hero, that I may greet him."

In the meanwhile, Ilya had heated the bit of iron, and when he came to give the old man his hand in greeting, he gave him, in place of it, the iron. And when the old man grasped it in his mighty hands, he said: "Stout are thy hands Ilya! A most mighty warrior art thou!"

Thereafter, as Svyatogor and his younger brother Ilya journeyed among the Holy Mountains, they found a great coffin in the way; and upon the coffin was this writing: "This coffin shall fit him who is destined to lie in it."

Then Ilya essayed to lie in it, but for him it was both too long and too wide. But when Svyatogor lay in it, it fitted him. Then the hero spoke these words:

"The coffin was destined for me; take the lid now, Ilya, and cover me." Ilya made answer: "I will not take the lid, elder brother, neither will I cover thee. Lo! this is no small jest that thou makest, preparing to entomb thyself."

Then the hero himself took the lid, and covered his coffin with it. But when he would have raised

it again, he could not, though he strove and strained mightily; and he spoke to Ilya: "Aï, younger brother! 'Tis plain my fate hath sought me out. I cannot raise the lid; do thou try now to lift it."

Then Ilya strove, but could not. Said Hero Svyatogor: "Take my great battle sword, and smite athwart the lid." But Ilya's strength was not enough to lift the sword, and Svyatogor called him:

"Bend down to the rift in the coffin, that I may breathe upon thee with my heroic breath." When Ilya had done this, he felt strength within him, thrice as much as before, lifted the great battle sword, and smote athwart the lid. Sparks flashed from that blow, but where the great brand struck, an iron ridge sprang forth. Again spoke Svyatogor:

"I stifle, younger brother! essay yet one more blow upon the lid, with my huge sword."

Then Ilya smote along the lid, and a ridge of iron sprang forth. Yet again spoke Svyatogor:

"I die, oh, younger brother! Bend down now to the crevice. Yet once again will I breathe upon thee, and give thee all my vast strength."

But Ilya made answer: "My strength sufficeth me, elder brother; had I more, the earth could not bear me."

"Thou hast done well, younger brother," said Svyatogor, "in that thou hast not obeyed my last behest. I should have breathed upon thee the breath of death, and thou wouldst have lain dead beside me. But now, farewell. Possess thou my great battle sword, but bind my good heroic steed to my coffin; none save Svyatogor may possess that horse."

Then a dying breath fluttered through the

crevice. Ilya took leave of Hero Svyatogor, bound the good heroic steed to the coffin, girt the great battle sword about his waist, and rode forth into the open plain.

And Svyatogor's burning tears flow through the coffin evermore.

Quiet Dunaï Ivanovich

QUIET[1] Dunaï Ivanovich roamed long from land to land, and in his wanderings, came at length to the kingdom of Lithuania. Three years did Dunaï serve the King of that land as Equerry, three years as Grand Steward, three as Lord High Seneschal, and yet three more as Groom of the Chambers.

The King loved the youth and gave him meet guerdon; and the young Princess Nastasya favoured him and kept him in her heart.

On a certain day, the King made a great feast and banquet; and the Princess would have kept the youth from it. "Go not to this worshipful feast, Dunaï," she said. "There will be much eating and drunkenness, and thou wilt boast of me, the fair maid. And so shalt thou lose thy head, Dunaï."

But Dunaï heeded not her warning and went to the feast. When all were well drunken, and the feast waxed merry, they began to brag.[2] And Dunaï spoke much, boasting of his many wanderings,

[1] Dunaï signifies not only the Danube, but any river, and *quiet* or *peaceful* is always the accompanying adjective. See Appendix.

[2] Bragging was very popular—in ancient times, and is often met with in ballads of Northern lands. A very amusing set of brags or gabs occurs in the *chanson de geste* "Charlemagne's Journey to Jerusalem."

of the King's favour and rewards, and of how the young Princess Nastasya kept him ever in her heart.

The King liked not this brag, and cried in a loud voice: "Ho there, ye pitiless headsmen! Seize this quiet Dunaï by the white hands, by his golden ring; lead him into the open plain, and cut off his turbulent head."

Then Dunaï besought his keepers to lead him past Nastasya's dwelling, and before he was come to it, he cried softly:

"Sleepest thou, Nastasya? Wakest thou not? Lo, they are leading Dunaï to the open plain." And when he was over against her window he shouted at the top of his voice:

"Sleepest thou, Nastasya? Wakest thou not? Dunaï goeth to his death. Forgive!"

With that great shout the palace quaked; Princess Nastasya woke, and ran forth into the spacious court of the palace, in a loose robe without a girdle, and cried in piercing tones:

"Ho there, ye pitiless headsmen! Take treasure as much as ye will, and release Dunaï in the open plain. Then go seek in the royal pot-house [1] an accursed Tatar, some vile wretch whom ye may render drunk with wine. Cut off his turbulent head, and bear it to the King in place of Dunaï's."

The headsmen hearkened to the Princess's words, released Dunaï, and bore the drunkard's head to the King of Lithuania.

But Dunaï traversed the open plain and came to Kief town. There he entered the royal pot-house, and drank away his hat from Grecian land, all his flowered garments, his shoes of morocco, and all that he had.

[1] *Kabak.* An interpolation of the sixteenth century. The pot-houses were called *royal* or *imperial* because, until recently, the crown derived its revenue from them.

And as Dunaï sat thus over his horns of liquor, it chanced on a day, that courteous Prince Vladimir [1] made a great and honourable feast, to many princes, boyars (nobles) and mighty Russian heroes, where they sat eating bread and salt, carving the white swan, and quaffing sweet mead, and green wine.

The long day drew towards its close, the red sun sank to even, and all was merry at the feast when the guests began their brags. One vaunted his good steed and one his youthful prowess, this knight his sharp sword and that his deeds of might; the wise man praised his aged father or mother, the foolish his young wife or sister.

Then through the banquet hall paced Fair Sun Prince Vladimir, wrung his white hands and shook his yellow curls. No golden trumpet pealed, nor silver pipe trilled sweet, but Prince Vladimir spoke:

"Boast not, brothers; glory not in your prowess nor in good steeds nor golden treasure. Have not I also red gold, pure silver, fair round pearls? But in this may ye glory: All at my feast are wedded, save one, your Prince. I only am unwed. Know ye not of some Princess, who is my equal? Lofty of stature must she be, of perfect form, her gait delicate and graceful, like the peacock; a faint flush in her face like to a white hare, and eyes of the clear falcon must she have, yellow hair, brows of blackest sable, and swan-speech entrancing. So shall I have one with whom I may think my thoughts, and take counsel, and ye my mighty princes, heroes and all Kief, one to whom ye may pay homage."

Then all at meat fell sad and silent, and none spoke a word. The great fled behind the lesser,

[1] See Appendix for Vladimir in his historical and mythological aspects.

the lesser hid behind the small, and from the small came no reply.

At length there stepped forth from behind the oven a bold, brave youth, Dobrynya Nikitich, saying :

" Our liege, Prince Vladimir ! grant me to speak a word without speedy death or distant exile, and chastise me not therefor."

" Speak, then, Dobrynya Nikitich," said Vladimir, " God will forgive thee."

Then spoke Dobrynya, and wavered not : " I know a fitting mate for thee, a princess, and all thou hast described is she—a beauty such as exists not elsewhere in all the white world. I have not seen her, but her fame I have heard from my brother in arms, my cross-brother, mighty Dunaï Ivanovich. He sitteth now in the great royal pot-house over his horns, and hath not the wherewithal to come to thy honourable feast."

Then spoke Vladimir : " Take my golden keys, open my iron-bound chests, take treasure as thou requirest, and go, Dobrynya, to the royal pot-house, ransom Dunaï's raiment, and conduct Dunaï to our honourable feast."

So Dobrynya took gold, and went to the pot-house. " Ho there, ye innkeepers and usurers ! " he cried, " take what ye will, and restore Dunaï's garments."

When this was done, Dobrynya told Dunaï how he was bidden to Vladimir's feast; and Dunaï made answer : " Lo ! with drunkenness and hunger my turbulent head is broken."

So they poured him a cup of green wine, in weight a pood and a half.[1] This Dunaï grasped

[1] Sixty pounds. The vessels of liquor drunk by the heroes are rain-bearing clouds.

in one hand and drained at one draught. Then the good youths set out; and as they passed through Kief, maids and wives thrust heads and shoulders from the windows crying: "Whence come such fair youths as these?"

When they came to the palace of white stone, to the fair banquet hall, Dunaï crossed himself as prescribed, did reverence as enjoined, on two, three, and four sides, to all the Russian heroes and to Prince Vladimir in particular. And they gave Dunaï a seat at the oaken board, in the great corner,[1] the place of honour.

As he feasted, Fair Sun Vladimir began to inquire of Dunaï, and poured out green wine into a great cup of crystal from the East, set in a rim of gilt, and brought it to quiet Dunaï. The measure of that cup was a bucket and a half, and its weight a pood and a half. Quiet Dunaï took the cup in one hand, and quaffed it at a breath. Then Fair Sun Vladimir poured an aurochs' horn of sweet mead, a pood and a half, and after that a measure of the beer of drunkenness. These also quiet Dunaï drained at one draught, and intoxication showed itself in his head. Nevertheless he stepped forward without staggering, and spoke without confusion:

"I know a bride fit to mate with thee, royal Vladimir. Twelve full years I served in yonder land of Lithuania, and the King's Majesty hath two great and fair daughters. The eldest, Princess Nastasya, is no mate for thee; she rideth ever

[1] The right-hand corner facing the entrance is the place of honour in the East; the most illustrious tombs stand in the corners of the churches, and at the Coronation banquet, the Emperor dines alone in one corner of the ancient *terem* (palace) known as the gold room. The kings of France sat in the left-hand corner of the apartment to hold their *Beds of Justice*.

over the open plain seeking adventures. But the younger, the Princess Apraxia, sitteth at home in a fair chamber embroidering a kerchief in red gold. Behind thrice nine locks she sitteth, and thrice nine guards, in a lofty castle, that the fair red sun may not scorch her nor the fine and frequent rains drop on her, nor the stormy winds breathe on her; —that she may be seen of few."

"Aï, my Russian heroes!" spoke Prince Vladimir then: "Whom shall we send to far-off Lithuania?"

And a hero made answer: "Fair Sun Vladimir! we have not been in strange and distant countries, nor seen strange people. It is not meet that we should go. Send quiet Dunaï Ivanovich; he hath served as ambassador, and viewed many lands. He talketh much; therefore send him to do thy wooing."

Then spake Prince Vladimir: "Go thou, my Dunaiushka, to that brave Lithuanian realm, and woo the Princess Apraxia for me with fair words."

"Lord," said Dunaï, "it is not meet for a youth to go alone."

"Take then a host of forty thousand, and treasure, as much as thou requirest: and if the King give not his daughter willingly, then fetch her by force."

"I need no host to wage battle, nor golden treasure to barter," quoth Dunaï. "I will essay heroic force and royal threat. Grant me but my beloved comrade, Dobrynya Nikitich,—he is of good birth, and understandeth how to deal with people. And give us two good colts which have never borne saddle or bridle. And write thou a scroll, that our wooing of the Princess Apraxia for our Prince Vladimir is honourable."

All these things Fair Sun Vladimir did. Then

Dunaï and Dobrynya went forth from the palace, and saddled their steeds; put on them plaited bridles of parti-coloured silks, and silken saddle-cloths, and upon these, felts, and then the saddles, their small Cherkessian saddles, and secured them with twelve girths with silver buckles,—the stirrup buckles were of gold. Then they arrayed and armed themselves; put on their little caps from the Sorochinsky land,[1] forty poods in weight, took their maces of damascened steel, their stout bows, their silken whips, mounted their good steeds and rode through the narrow lanes of Kief. And the good steeds galloped at will.

But when they reached the highway out of Kief, they urged their good steeds on, spurring their brisk flanks, and smiting them with their braided whips of silk. Past deep lakes they rode, through forests dreaming still in primeval denseness; and so came to the brave land of Lithuania, and to the royal palace.

There quiet Dunaï asked no leave of gate-keepers nor porters, but flung wide the barriers and led the horses into the spacious court, bidding Dobrynya stand there and guard them. So Dobrynya took the bridles in his left hand, and in his right, his little elm-wood club from Sorochinsky.

"Stand thou there, Dobrynya," spake quiet Dunaï then, "and look towards the royal audience hall; when I shout, then will be the time to come."

Then quiet Dunaï entered the royal hall where sat the King, crossing himself and saluting as prescribed by custom.

"Hail, little father, King of brave Lithuania!"

"Hail, little Dunaï Ivanovich! Whither leadeth thy path? Art thou come to show thyself or to view us? Twelve years thou didst serve us faith-

[1] Saracen land.

fully; art thou now come to fight against us, or to serve us as of yore?—Yet eat thy fill, fair youth, and drink as good seemeth to thee." Then the King seated him at the great table in the place of honour, giving him sweet viands and mead, and began again to inquire his errand.

"My errand is good," Dunaï made answer. "I come to woo thy daughter Apraxia for the Fair Sun, Prince Vladimir." Then he laid the scroll on the oaken table.

The King looking upon it, tore the black curls from his head and cast them on the brick floor, as he spoke in wrath:

"Stupid in sooth is Vladimir of Royal Kief, in that he sent not as wooer a wealthy peasant, a good lord or a mighty hero! But he must needs send me some noble's serf! Ho there, my trusty servants! Take this Dunaï by his white hands, seize him by his golden ring, by his yellow curls; lead him to the deep dungeons for his discourteous speech. Shut him in with oaken planks, with iron gratings, and above sprinkle orange-tawny sand. Let his food be water and oats alone, until he shall bethink himself and gain his senses."

Quiet Dunaï hung his turbulent head, and dropped his clear eyes to the floor; then raised his small white hand and smote the table with his fist. The fair liquors all were spilled, the dishes rolled away, the tables fell together, and the railed balconies of the palace sat awry. The Tatars all were terrified, the King fled to his lofty tower, and covered himself with his cloak of marten skins.

Then quiet Dunaï leaped over the golden chair (for he perceived that the matter was not a light one), seized one Tatar by his heels, and began to slay the rest.

"This Tatar is tough," he cried; "he will not break; the Tatar is wiry, he will not tear."

Dobrynya at that shout, began to lay about him, and slew five hundred Tatars with his own right hand.

Then the King's trusty servants fled to him from his princely court: "Aï, little father, King of brave Lithuania! Thou knowest not the evil that is come upon thee. Into thy royal court no falcon clear hath flown, no raven black hath fluttered, but a bold and goodly youth hath ridden. In his left hand he graspeth the silken bridles of two good steeds, in his right he holdeth a club of elm-wood filled with lead. Wheresoever he waveth that club, the Tatars fall before it. He hath slain them all, to the last man, and none is left to continue the race!"

Then the King of Lithuania cried: "Aï, quiet little Dunaï Ivanovich! Forget not my hospitality of yore! Sit thou at one table with me, and let us consider this wooing of Prince Vladimir. Take my elder daughter."

"I will not," said quiet Dunaï, and ceased not to slay.

"Take then the Princess Apraxia, if thou wilt!" said the King when he saw that.

Then quiet Dunaï went to the lofty castle, and began to knock off the locks and to force open the doors. He entered the golden-roofed tower, and came to where the most fair Princess Apraxia was pacing her chamber, clad in a thin robe without a girdle, her ruddy locks unbound, and no shoes upon her feet.

"Aï, Princess Apraxia! wilt thou wed with Prince Vladimir?" said Dunaï.

And she made answer: "These three years I have prayed the Lord that Prince Vladimir might be my husband."

Then quiet Dunaï Ivanovich took her by her small white hands, by her golden ring, and kissed her sugar lips for that sweet speech, and led her forth to the spacious court.

There the King met them, and said: "Take also the Princess's dowry." So thirty carts were laden with red gold, pure silver, fair round pearls and jewels.

Then they mounted their good steeds, and rode over the glorious, far-reaching, open plain.

Dark night overtook them on the road. So the good youths pitched a linen pavilion, and lay down to sleep. They placed their good steeds at their feet, their sharp spears at their heads; at their right hands lay their stout swords, at their left their daggers of steel.

The good youths slept and slumbered, enjoying the dark night. Nothing saw they, and nothing did they hear, not even the Tatar riding across the plain.

They rose while it was still very early, and set out upon their way. And the Tatar rode in pursuit, his steed all covered with the mire of the way.

Then Dunaï was aware of the knight in the way, and sent Dobrynya on to Kief town in Holy Russia, with the fair Princess Apraxia, but remained himself in the open plain to meet that stout, bold adversary.

When the Tatar perceived that he was pursued in turn, and that Dunaï had overtaken him, he began to smite Dunaï with his spear, and to say to himself: "Halt, Tatar, on the open plain; roar, Tatar, like a wild beast; whistle, Tatar, like a serpent!"

So the Tatar roared and whistled;—the pebbles were scattered over the plain, the grass withered, the flowerets drooped, and Dunaï fell from his good

steed. But quickly sprang Dunaï to his nimble feet, and fought the Tatar knight, with mace, far-reaching spear and sharp sword, until all were broken or dulled, and he had overcome his adversary. Then he drew his dagger, and would have pierced him to the heart.

"Tell me now, accursed Tatar," cried Dunaï, "and conceal it not: What is thy birth and tribe?"

"Sat I on thy white breast," quoth the Tatar, "I would inquire neither tribe nor family, but would stab thee."

Then Dunaï sat upon his foe's white breast, and would have pierced it, but his tender heart was terrified, and his arm stiffened at the shoulder: for the bosom was that of a woman.

"How now, fair Dunaï! knowest thou me not? Yet we trod one path, sat in one bower, drank from one cup! And thou didst dwell with us twelve full years. — But loud-voiced men have come from Holy Russia, while I was from home, and have stolen away my sister. And her I seek."

"Aï, Princess Nastasya!" cried quiet Dunaï, and raised her from the damp earth by her white hands, and kissed her sugar mouth. "Let us go to Kief town, and receive the wonder-working cross, and take the golden crowns." [1]

So he placed her upon his good steed, took from her her mace of steel and her sharp sword, and mounting, led her horse behind them.

Thus they came to Kief town, to God's church: and in the outer porch, they met Fair Sun Prince Vladimir and the Princess Apraxia who were come thither to be married. The sisters greeted each other, and Nastasya received baptism. Then they were married, the younger sister first, as was meet,

[1] Be married: referring to the crowns held over the heads of bride and groom during the marriage ceremony.

and the elder afterwards. And great was the marriage feast which courteous Prince Vladimir made for himself and for quiet Dunaï Ivanovich.

—Three years they lived in mirth and joy: and in the fourth year, courteous Prince Vladimir made again a great and honourable feast. When all had well drunken, they began to make brags. Dunaï Ivanovich bragged also. "In all Kief town," quoth he, "is no such youth as quiet Dunaï. From the Lithuanian land he drew forth two white swans; he married himself, and gave another also in marriage."

Princess Nastasya answered him: "Is not thy boast empty, Dunaiushka? Not long have I dwelt in this town, yet much have I learned. Fair is Churilo Plenkovich, daring Alyosha Popovich, and courteous young Dobrynya Nikitich;" and so she praised the different heroes, yet spake no word of praise for Dunaï, who had praised himself.

"Neither in deeds of knightly exercise are the heroes lacking," quoth the Princess, "and even I can shoot somewhat. Let us now take a stout bow, and let us set a sharp dagger in the open plain, a full verst [1] away, and before it, a silver ring. Let us shoot through the silver ring at the sharp dagger in such wise that the arrow may fall into two equal parts against the dagger, into two parts alike to the eye and of equal weight."

Quiet Dunaï was both ashamed and wroth at this, and said: "Good, Nastasiushka! let us go to the plain, and shoot our fiery darts."

So they went forth. Nastasya sent a burning arrow; it passed through the ring, and falling upon the sharp blade, was parted in twain; and both the parts were exactly equal.

Then Dunaiushka shot; the first arrow he sent

[1] Two-thirds of a mile.

too far, the second fell short, the third flew wide of the mark and was never found again.

Quiet Dunaï waxed very wroth thereat, and aimed a burning arrow smeared with serpent's fat at Nastasya's white breast. Then she besought him:

"Aï, fair Dunaï Ivanovich! forgive my foolish woman's words. Better will it be for thee to punish me. Let this be thy first reprimand: take thy silken whip, dip it in burning pitch, and chastise my body. And for the second reprimand: bind me by my woman's hair to thy stirrups, and send thy horse at speed over the wide plain.—Bury me to the breast in the damp earth,—beat me with oaken rods,—torture me with hunger,—feed me with oats, and so keep me three full months.—But grant me only to bear thy son, and leave a posterity behind me in the world. For such a child there is not in all the town. His little legs are silver to the knee, his arms to the elbow are of pure gold; upon his brow gloweth the fair red sun, upon his crown shine countless stars, and at the back of his head the bright moon beameth."

Dunaï heeded not her speech, but sent his burning arrow into her white breast, and took out her heart with his dagger. And his son was as she had said.

Then Dunaï's heroic heart burned within him for grief and remorse. "Where the white swan fell," he cried, "there also shall fall the falcon bright." Then he placed the hilt of his dagger on the damp earth, and fell upon its sharp point with his white breast. And from that spot flowed forth straightway two swift streams; the greater was the river Don, the lesser the Dnyepr, Nastasya's river. Nastasya's river flowed to the Kingdom of Lithuania, and thence to the Golden Horde. The

Don, twenty fathoms deep and forty wide, ran past Kief town. Where they met, two cypress trees sprang up, and twined together, and on their leaves was written: "This marvel came to pass for the wonder of all young people, and the solace of the old."

Thus the Song of quiet Dunaï for ever shall be sung, for the peace of the blue sea and the hearing of all good people.

Stavr Godinovich the Boyar (Noble)

COURTEOUS Prince Vladimir made a great feast in royal Kief town, and summoned thereto all his princes, boyars, mighty heroes and bold polyanitzas : [1] likewise many merchants and strangers.

Among these last was young Stavr Godinovich from Chernigof. Softly he mounted the steps, and lightly paced through the antechambers, as he crossed himself and bowed low on all sides, and to Prince Vladimir and his daughter in particular.

The red sun inclined to even, and all the youths were merry with drink, so that they waxed boastful. The heroes vaunted their good steeds, heroic strength or golden treasure, the merchants their Siberian fox pelts and black sables. But Stavr sat alone, eating and drinking nothing, and making no brag. As Prince Vladimir paced the banquet hall, he espied Stavr sitting thus; and he poured out a cup of green wine and brought it to him, inquiring wherefore he neither ate nor drank.

"Thou tastest not my white swan," he said, "neither makest thou any brag. Hast thou, then, no towns with their suburbs, villages with their hamlets, nor even so much as a good mother or a praiseworthy young wife, of whom thou mayest boast?"

[1] Female warriors.

"Stavr hath enough whereof to boast, Prince Vladimir of royal Kief," quoth Stavr. "What petty outpost is this Kief of royal Vladimir, forsooth? Stavr's spacious court is no worse than the whole of Kief town. His palace covers seven versts, his halls and chambers of white oak are hung with gray beaver skins, the ceilings with black sables. His floors are of silver only—his hasps and hinges of steel. Thirty youths also hath Stavr, master shoemakers all;—they sew shoes, pausing not. Stavr weareth a pair a day, and yet another day, perchance: then are they taken to the market place, and sold to princes and nobles for their full worth. And yet more hath Stavr whereof to boast:—thirty young tailors, masters of their trade, who make ever new kaftans, so that Stavr weareth his garments but a day, or at the most, two days, and then selleth them in the market to princes and nobles at a great price.—But Stavr will not brag.—And yet more hath Stavr—a golden-coated mare, whose cost was five hundred roubles. On the best of her foals Stavr rideth, and the worst he selleth at great prices to princes and boyars. Hence Stavr's golden treasure is never exhausted. Yet one thing hath Stavr whereof he will boast, a young wife, Vasilisa Mikulichna:[1] she could buy and sell all Kief town, deceive all these princes and nobles, and drive even Fair Sun Vladimir from his senses."

Then all at the feast fell silent at this word. Prince Vladimir liked not the discourteous speech, and his nobles cried:

"Fair Sun Vladimir, Prince of royal Kief! Let us now thrust this churl into a cold dungeon, and let his young wife deceive us all, princes and nobles,

[1] Daughter of Mikula the Villager's Son, and sister of Nastasya, Dobrynya's wife, according to the peasant singer.

drive thee, Prince Vladimir, from thy wits, and deliver Stavr from his prison."

So Vladimir gave command that iron fetters should be placed on Stavr's hands and feet, and that he should be led to a dungeon forty fathoms deep, with iron doors and locks of steel, where his food should be oats and water.

But Stavr's serving-man mounted his master's good steed and rode in haste to Chernigof, to Stavr's palace of white stone, and his young wife.

Now Vasilisa Mikulichna had made a great banquet for the wives of the merchants and rulers of the town, and so the man found them feasting.

When her husband's man told her all that had befallen in Kief, the young wife rose from her bench of oak, and said:

"Time is it, my welcome guests, to betake yourselves to your own homes and dwellings."

Then she seated herself in her folding chair, and for the space of three full hours she meditated how she might release her husband.

"Untold treasure of gold will not ransom Stavr," she said, "nor may he be released by mighty heroic strength. Stavr must be saved by woman's wiles."

Then she wrote a letter to show that she was an ominous ambassador from the Island of Kodol, in the land of Ledenetz, come on an honourable mission to Fair Sun Prince Vladimir, to sue for the hand of his fair daughter Beauty.[1] After that she hastened to her heroic chamber, and summoned her tiring-women: "Aï, my trusty maids, make haste and cut off my ruddy braid, fetch me an ambassador's apparel, and saddle me a heroic steed."

In very great haste they sheared off her ruddy locks in fashion like a man's, dressed her in black

[1] Zapava, or Zabava.

velvet breeches and the garments of an ambassador, and led forth her horse.

Then she summoned a body-guard of forty good youths, and they mounted and rode with her.

When they had traversed half the way, a stern messenger came riding towards them from Kief town, and as they came together they saluted, palm kissing palm. Then the messenger began to inquire of Vasilisa whence this bold and goodly youth was come and whither he was going.

She told him that she was sent by the stern King Yetmanuila Yetmanuilovich, to collect tribute for twelve years,—three thousand roubles for each year.

In turn the messenger told her, that he was on his way to seal up Stavr's palace, and to fetch his young wife to Kief. Then spoke the good youths of Vasilisa's guard:

"We have been at Stavr's palace, and there is no one therein: for his young wife hath departed to the distant land, to the Golden Horde."

So the messenger turned back to Kief, and outriding them, told Prince Vladimir privately that a threatening ambassador,[1] Vasily Mikulich, was on his way to Kief from a far-off land.

Prince Vladimir was sore troubled thereat, and the people made haste to sweep the streets, and to lay pine-trees in the muddy ways, so that they might be passable. Then they waited outside the gates, for the coming of the ambassador from the stern King Yetmanuila Yetmanuilovich from the far-off land of Ledenetz.

But when Vasily Mikulich came, he passed not the gates:—he leaped the city walls, passed the corner towers, and came to the spacious princely court. There he sprang from his good steed,

[1] Vasilisa appears as a Tzarevich in some versions.

thrust the butt-end of his far-reaching spear into the earth, flung his silken bridle over the golden spike at its point, and entered straightway the fair, royal halls, asking leave of none, but flinging wide the doors.

There Vasilisa bowed on all sides, and to Prince Vladimir in particular, laid her letter on the oaken table, and demanded the hand of his daughter [1] in marriage.

Prince Vladimir rose to his nimble feet, took the letter in his white hands, broke the seal and scanned each word narrowly, then spake :

" 'Tis well, Vasily Mikulich. I will give thee Beauty to wife. I go now to take counsel with my daughter."

But when he came to his well-loved daughter, Beauty said : " What art thou minded to do, dear father? wilt thou give a maiden in marriage to a woman? For I have marked this Vasily Mikulich. No threatening ambassador is he—but a woman, by all the signs. When he walketh in the court-yard, 'tis like a duck swimming; his speech is a woman's pipe, his gait in the royal halls is mincing; when he sitteth upon the wall-bench, he presseth his feet close one to the other; his little hands are white, his fingers delicate, and upon them the marks of rings still linger."

" That we shall see," quoth Vladimir : " for I will now prove this ambassador. I will have the steam bath prepared for him after his journey. If he be in truth a mighty hero, then will he come to the bath with me : but if he be a woman, he will not come."

So the bath was heated, and Vladimir went to invite Vasily Mikulich.

[1] Evidently the same Beauty (Zapava) who figures in other *bylinas* as Vladimir's niece.

"Wilt thou steam thyself with me, after the road, good youth?" he said. And Vasily replied:

"My soul burneth to do that. Pleasing will it be after my journey."

Now, Prince Vladimir was royally apparelled, and while he was busy with putting off his garments, Vasilisa hastened to the bath, wet her head, and came forth as Vladimir entered.

"With great speed hast thou steamed thyself, Ambassador Vasily Mikulich! Why didst thou not await my coming?"

"Thou art at home and at leisure, Prince Vladimir, but I am a traveller; my business brooketh no long delay in the bath. I am come to woo. Give me thy young daughter to wife."

"I will take counsel with the maiden," quoth Vladimir, and went to his daughter.

But Beauty said: "Wilt thou make thyself a laughing-stock for all Russia, my father, and wed thy daughter to a woman? For, by all signs, she is no man."

"I will prove her yet once more, my dear daughter," quoth Vladimir, and went to Vasily.

"Is it pleasing to thee to shoot a match with my young men, Vasiliushka Mikulich?"

"My soul longeth for that," she answered. Then they went forth upon the open plain, and began to shoot at a damp oak, a full verst distant. The arrow of one good youth flew past, another good youth shot short, a third shot wide of the mark. Some shot fair, but all the fiery arrows which were lodged in that tree by heroic hands did but make the damp oak quiver, as in stress of weather.

Then Vasily Mikulich spoke:

"Ho there, Prince Vladimir! I will have none of these heroic bows. I have by me a little travel-

ling bow, with which I adventure out upon the open plain." Then came bold and goodly youths from the white pavilion without the walls, where she had left her body-guard. Five men bore the first end, and as many more the last, and thirty stout youths dragged along the quiver of burning arrows. Then she took an arrow in her small left hand, an arrow of steel, drew the great bow to her ear, and took aim at the damp oak. The cord of the stout bow sang, Vladimir crept about, and all his heroes stood as though stifled with stove gas. The firm dart screamed, lodged in the damp, ringbarked oak, and shivered it into splinters. Thereupon Prince Vladimir spat to one side, and said as he went away: "I will prove this ambassador yet once again. If he be a woman, he will refuse a wrestling match."

So he assembled thirty good youths and bold, in his spacious court, and spoke this word:

"Aï, Vasily Mikulich! doth thy soul burn to wrestle with my men?"

"In sooth, Fair Prince Vladimir, are there any with whom I may wrestle?" the ambassador made answer. "Since my childhood have I run the streets, and many a bout have I wrestled with the children in sport." Then Vasily stepped forth into the court, grasped two heroes in one hand, three in the other, and knocked their skulls together, so that there was no soul left in them. Vladimir began to entreat her:

"Curb thy heroic heart, young Vasily Mikulich, I pray: spare at least a remnant of our people."

Vasily answered: "I came on an honourable mission—to woo thy beloved daughter. If thou wilt now give her with honour, with honour will I take her; but if not, I will take her without honour, and I will beat in thy sides."

Then Prince Vladimir went no more to ask his daughter Beauty's pleasure in this matter, but betrothed her forthwith to the stern ambassador, and ordered a noble banquet and wedding feast.

On the third day of the feast, when the time drew near for them to fare to God's church and be married, Vasily grew sad and exceeding sorrowful. Then Prince Vladimir began to inquire of him why he was not merry.

Vasily made answer: "I know not why my soul is heavy. My father hath died, perchance, or my dear mother. Hast thou then no good youths, no players upon the gusly [1] of maple-wood, who may solace us?"

But when the harp-players were summoned, and played and sang songs of the olden days and of the present, and of all times, Vasily was still sad, and said:

"Where is now Stavr Godinovich from our land? He is a master player upon the harp of maple-wood, and none but he can cheer my spirit."

Then Prince Vladimir said to himself: "If I summon not Stavr, I shall anger the ambassador; but if I summon him, he will be carried away."

Nevertheless he dared not offend Vasily, and sent for Stavr, to the princely banquet-hall.

Stavr strung his harp, and began to pluck the strings. One string he strung from Kief, and one from Tzargrad,[2] the third from far Jerusalem. He played great dances, and sang songs from over the blue sea.

Then Vasiliushka, the stern ambassador, began to sleep and dream,[3] and to say: "Aï, Fair Sun

[1] A sort of recumbent harp of four octaves.

[2] Constantinople.

[3] Among the ancient Slavs this was regarded as the highest compliment which could be paid to a musician.

Prince Vladimir; let Stavr go to my white pavilion, and view there my body-guard, and walk in the open fields." This Vladimir would fain have refused, yet dared not anger the man; and so allowed it.

When they were come to the open plain and the pavilion, Vasilisa said: "Dost thou not know me, Stavr?" And he answered: "After that dungeon, I cannot recall far distant years."

"Aï, thou stupid Stavr! Knowest thou not thy young wife Vasilisa Mikulichna?"

"Yea, her I should know after thirteen years."

"Foolish Stavr! thou hast not known me after scant three months."

Then she went into the pavilion, put off her manly garb, and donned her own raiment; and coming forth she took Stavr by his white hands, kissed his sugar mouth, called him her beloved husband. Then he knew his young wife, and said: "What will Fair Sun Vladimir do to us now? Let us mount and ride swiftly hence!"

But Vasilisa said: "Not so: we must not steal away in this fashion from royal Kief. Let us rather go to Prince Vladimir."

When they came to the royal palace, Stavr said: "Aï, thou Fair Sun Prince Vladimir! I have made good my boast; for thou hast betrothed thy daughter to my young wife."

Then was Prince Vladimir shamed, and spoke this word: "With reason did Stavr boast of his young wife, Vasilisa Mikulichna! May God forgive thee thy former offence! But boast no more of thy young wife, and trade evermore in our good city of Kief without tax."

But Stavr and Vasilisa mounted their good

steeds, and rode to the glorious town of Chernigof, to their lordly villages and palace of white stone. No more did Stavr frequent lordly banquets, and never more bragged he of his young wife, but dwelt thenceforth and took his ease in Chernigof.

Ilya of Murom and Nightingale the Robber

YOUNG Ilya of Murom, Ivan's son, went to matins on Easter morn. And as he stood there in church, he vowed a great vow: "To sing at high mass that same Easter day in Kief town, and to go thither by the straight way." And yet another vow he took: "As he fared to that royal town by the straight way, not to stain his hand with blood, nor yet his sharp sword with the blood of the accursed Tatars." His third vow he swore upon his mace of steel: "That though he should go the straight way, he would not shoot his fiery darts."

Then he departed from the cathedral church, entered the spacious courtyard and began to saddle good Cloudfall, his shaggy bay steed, to arm himself and prepare for his journey to the famous town of Kief, to the worshipful feast, and the Fair Sun Prince Vladimir of royal Kief. Good Cloudfall's mane was three ells in length, his tail three fathoms, and his hair of three colours. Ilya put on him first the plaited bridle, next twelve saddlecloths, twelve felts, and upon them a metal-bound Cherkessian saddle. The silken girths were twelve in number —not for youthful vanity but for heroic strength; the stirrups were of damascened steel from beyond the seas, the buckles of bronze which rusteth not,

weareth not, the silk from Samarcand, which chafeth not, teareth not.

They saw the good youth as he mounted,—as he rode they saw him not; so swift was his flight, there seemed but a smoke-wreath on the open plain, as when wild winds of winter whirl about the snow. Good Cloudfall skimmed over the grass, and above the waters; high over the standing trees he soared, the primeval oaks, yet lower than the drifting clouds. From mountain to mountain he sprang, from hill to hill he galloped; little rivers and lakes dropped between his feet; where his hoofs fell, founts of water gushed forth; in the open plain smoke eddied, and rose aloft in a pillar. At each leap Cloudfall compassed a verst and a half.

In the open steppe, young Ilya hewed down a forest and raised a godly cross, and wrote thereon:

"Ilya of Murom, the Old Kazák, rideth to royal Kief town, on his first heroic quest."

When he drew near to Chernigof, there stood a great host of Tatars,—three Tzareviches, each with forty thousand men. The cloud of steam from the horses was so great, that the fair red sun was not seen by day, nor the bright moon by night. The gray hare could not course, nor the clear falcon fly, about that host, so vast was it.

When Ilya saw that, he dismounted, and falling down before good Cloudfall's right foot, he entreated him:

"Help me, my shaggy bay!" So Cloudfall soared like a falcon clear, and Ilya plucked up a damp, ringbarked oak from the damp earth, from amid the stones and roots, and bound it to his left stirrup, grasped another in his right hand, and began to brandish it. "Every man may take a vow," quoth he, "but not every man can fulfil it."

Where he waved the damp oak, a street ap-

peared; where he drew it back, a lane. Great as was the number that he slew, yet twice that number did his good steed trample under foot: not one was spared to continue their race.

The gates of Chernigof were strongly barred, a great watch was kept, and the stout and mighty heroes stood in council. Therefore Ilya flew on his good steed over the city wall (the height of the wall was twelve fathoms), and entered the church where all the people were assembled, praying God, repenting and receiving the sacrament against sure approaching death. Ilya crossed himself as prescribed, did reverence as enjoined, and cried:

"Hail, ye merchants of Chernigof, warrior-maidens and mighty heroes all! Why repent ye now, and receive the sacrament? Why do ye bid farewell thus to the white world?"

Then they told him how they were besieged by accursed Tatars, and Ilya said: "Go ye upon the famous wall of your city, and look toward the open plain."

They did as he commanded, and lo! where had stood the many, very many foreign standards, like a dark, dry forest, the accursed Tatars were now cut down and heaped up, like a field of grain which hath been reaped.

Then the men of Chernigof did lowly reverence to the good youth, and besought him that he would reveal his name, and abide in Chernigof to serve them as their Tzar, King, Voevoda,[1]—what he would; and that he would likewise accept at their hands a bowl of pure red gold, a bowl of fair silver, and one of fine seed-pearls.

"These I will not take," Ilya made answer, "though I have earned them, neither will I dwell with you either as Tzar or peasant. Live ye as of

[1] Originally this signified a war chieftain.

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old, my brothers, and show me the straight road to Kief town."

Then they told him: "By the straight road it is five hundred versts, and by the way about, a thousand. Yet take not the straight road, for therein lie three great barriers: the gray wolf trotteth not that way, the black raven flieth not overhead. The first barrier is the lofty mountains; the second is the Smorodina river, six versts in width, and the Black Morass; and beside that river, the third barrier is Nightingale the Robber.

"He hath built his nest on seven oaks, that magic bird. When he whistleth like a nightingale, the dark forest boweth to the earth, the green leaves wither, horse and rider fall as dead. For that cause the road is lost, and no man hath travelled it these thirty years."

When Ilya the Old Kazák heard that, he mounted his good steed, and rode forthwith that straight way. When he came to the lofty mountains, his good steed rose from the damp earth, and soared like a bright falcon over them and the tall dreaming forests. When he came to the Black Morass, he plucked great oaks with one hand, and flung them across the shaking bog for thirty versts while he led good Cloudfall with the other. When he came to Mother Smorodina, he beat his steed's fat sides, so that the horse cleared the river at a bound.

There sat Nightingale the Robber (surnamed the Magic Bird), and thrust his turbulent head out from his nest upon the seven oaks; sparks and flame poured from his mouth and nostrils. Then he began to pipe like a nightingale, to roar like an aurochs, and to hiss like a dragon. Thereat good Cloudfall, that heroic steed, fell upon his knees, and Ilya began to beat him upon his flanks and between his ears.

"Thou wolf's food!" cried Ilya, "thou grass-bag! Hast never been in the gloomy forest, nor heard the song of nightingale, the roar of wild beast, nor serpent's hiss?"

Then Ilya brake a twig from a willow that grew near by, that he might keep his vow not to stain his weapons with blood, fitted it to his stout bow, and conjured it: "Fly, little dart! Enter the Nightingale's left eye, come forth at his right ear!"

The good heroic steed rose to his feet, and the Robber Nightingale fell to the damp earth like a rick of grain.

Then the Old Kazák raised up that mighty robber, bound him to his stirrup by his yellow curls, and went his way. Ere long they came to the Nightingale's house, built upon seven pillars over seven versts of ground. About the court-yard was an iron paling, upon each stake thereof a spike, and on each spike the head of a hero. In the centre was the strangers' court; and there stood three towers with golden crests, spire joined to spire, beam merged in beam, roof wedded to roof. Green gardens were planted round about, all blossoming and blooming with azure flowers, and a fair orchard encircled all.

When the Magic Bird's children looked from the latticed casements, and beheld a hero riding with one at his stirrup, they cried: "Aï, lady mother! Our father cometh, and leadeth a man at his stirrup for us to eat."

But Elena, the one-eyed, Nightingale's witch daughter, looked forth and said: "Nay, it is the Old Kazák Ilya of Murom who rideth, and leadeth our father in bonds."

Then spoke Nightingale's nine sons: "We will transform ourselves into ravens, and rend that

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peasant with our iron beaks, and scatter his white body over the plain." But their father shouted to them that they should not harm the hero.

Nevertheless, Elena the witch ran into the wide courtyard, tore a steel beam of a hundred and fifty poods weight from the threshold, and hurled it at Ilya. The good youth wavered in his saddle, yet being nimble, he escaped the full force of the blow. Then he leaped from his horse, and took the witch on his foot: higher flew the witch then than God's temple, higher than the life-giving cross thereon, and fell against the rear wall of the court, where her skin burst.

"Foolish are ye, my children!" cried the Nightingale. "Fetch from the vaults a cart-load of fair gold, another of pure silver and a third of fine seed-pearls, and give to the Old Kazák, Ilya of Murom, that he may set me free."

Quoth Ilya: "If I should plant my sharp spear in the earth, and if thou shouldst heap treasure about it until it was covered, yet would I not release thee, Nightingale, lest thou shouldst resume thy thieving. But follow me now to glorious Kief town, that thou mayest receive forgiveness there."

Then his good Cloudfall began to prance, and the Magic Bird at his stirrup to dance, and in this wise came the good youth, the Old Kazák, to Kief, to glorious Prince Vladimir.

Now, fair Prince Vladimir of royal Kief was not at home; he had gone to God's temple. Therefore Ilya entered the court without leave or announcement, bound his horse to the golden ring in the carven pillar, and laid his commands upon that good heroic steed: "Guard thou the Nightingale, my charger, that he depart not from my stirrup of steel."

And to Nightingale he said: "Look to it

Nightingale, that thou depart not from my good steed; for there is no place in all the white world where thou mayest securely hide thyself from me!"

Then he betook himself to the Easter mass. There he crossed himself and did reverence as prescribed, on all four sides, and to the Fair Sun Prince Vladimir in particular. And after the mass was over, Prince Vladimir sent to bid the strange hero to the feast, and there inquired of him from what horde and land he came, and what was his parentage. So Ilya told him that he was the only son of honourable parents. "I stood at my home in Murom, at matins," quoth he, "and mass was but just ended when I came hither by the straight way."

When the heroes that sat at the prince's table heard that, they looked askance at him.

"Nay, good youth, liest thou not? boastest thou not?" said Fair Sun Vladimir. "That way hath been lost these thirty years, for there stand great barriers therein; accursed Tatars in the fields, black morasses; and beside the famed Smorodina, amid the bending birches, is the nest of the Nightingale on seven oaks; and that Magic Bird hath nine sons and eight daughters, and one is a witch. He hath permitted neither horse nor man to pass him these many years."

"Nay, thou Fair Sun Prince Vladimir," Ilya answered; "I did come the straight way, and the Nightingale Robber now sitteth bound within thy court."

Then all left the tables of white oak, and each outran the other to view the Nightingale, as he sat bound to the steel stirrup, with one eye fixed on Kief town and the other on Chernigof from force of habit. And Princess Apraxia came forth upon the railed balcony to look.

Prince Vladimir spoke: "Whistle, thou Nightingale, roar like an aurochs, hiss like a dragon."

But the Nightingale replied: "Not thy captive am I, Vladimir. 'Tis not thy bread I eat. But give me wine."

"Give him a cup of green wine," spake Ilya, "a cup of a bucket and a half, in weight a pood and a half, and a cake of fine wheat flour, for his mouth is now filled with blood from my dart."

Vladimir fetched a cup of green wine, and one of the liquor of drunkenness, and yet a third of sweet mead; and the Nightingale drained each at a draught. Then the Old Kazák commanded the Magic Bird to whistle, roar and hiss, but under his breath, lest harm might come to any.

But the Nightingale, out of malice, did all with his full strength. And at that cry, all the ancient palaces in Kief fell in ruins, the new castles rocked, the roofs through all the city fell to the ground, damp mother earth quivered, the heroic steeds fled from the court, the young damsels hid themselves, the good youths dispersed through the streets, and as many as remained to listen died. Ilya caught up Prince Vladimir under one arm and his Princess under the other, to shield them; yet was Vladimir as though dead for the space of three hours.

"For this deed of thine thou shalt die," spake Ilya in his wrath, and Vladimir prayed that at least a remnant of his people might be spared.

The Nightingale began to entreat forgiveness, and that he might be allowed to build a great monastery with his ill-gotten gold. "Nay," said Ilya, "this kind buildeth never, but destroyeth alway."

With that he took Nightingale the Robber by his white hands, led him far out upon the open plain, fitted a burning arrow to his stout bow, and shot it

into the black breast of that Magic Bird. Then he struck off his turbulent head, and scattered his bones to the winds,[1] and mounting his good Cloud-fall, came again to Prince Vladimir.

Again they sat at the oaken board, eating savoury viands and white swans, and quaffing sweet mead. Great gifts and much worship did Ilya receive, and Vladimir gave command that he should be called evermore Ilya of Murom the Old Kazák, after his native town.

[1] A Little Russian legend states that Ilya in his wrath chopped Nightingale into poppy seeds; and from those poppy seeds come the sweet-voiced and harmless nightingales of the present day.

Bold Alyosha the Pope's Son

FROM famous Rostof, that fair town, rode forth two mighty heroes, like two bright falcons soaring. Alyosha[1] Popovich (the pope's dear child) and Akim[2] Ivanovich were they hight. Shoulder to shoulder rode the warriors, heroic stirrup pressed to stirrup.

And as they roamed the open plain, they saw nothing,—no birds flying overhead, nor beast fleet coursing over the plain. They found but three broad roads lying upon the steppe, and where these ways met, a burning stone and a writing thereon.

Then said young Alyosha: "Thou, brother Akim Ivanovich, art learned in the lore of schools. Look now upon this writing on this stone, and interpret to me its meaning."

So Akim leaped from his good steed, and looked upon the writing, and found the three broad ways depicted therein.

The first way lay to Murom, the second to Chernigof, the third to Kief town and courteous Prince Vladimir.

Said Akim: "Ho there, brother, young Alyosha Popovich! Which way doth it please thee to ride?"

[1] A diminutive formed from Alexander, through Alexei. See Appendix.

[2] Popular for Joachim.

And young Alyosha answered: "Better will it be for us to go to Kief town, to courteous Prince Vladimir."

So they wheeled their good steeds about, and rode to Kief town.

Ere they reached the Safat river, they halted amid green meadows (for Akim must needs feed the horses). There they pitched two pavilions, for Alyosha desired greatly to sleep. And when young Akim had hobbled the good steeds, and loosed them in the green meadow, he lay down likewise in his own pavilion to slumber.

The autumn night passed. Alyosha awoke right early, rose, washed himself in the dews of dawn, dried himself upon a white cloth, and prayed God toward the East. Then young Akim went to the good steeds, and led them to the Safat stream to water them, for Alyosha had commanded him to saddle them with speed; and when this was done they mounted, and made ready to go to Kief town.

As they rode, there met them in the way a wandering psalm-singer. His foot-gear was woven of the seven silks, soled with pure silver, and the faces were studded with red gold. His long mantle was of sable, his hat from Sorochinsky, from the Grecian land; his travelling whip weighed thirty poods, his cudgel moulded of heaviest lead weighed fifty. He spoke this word:

"Hail, bold and goodly youths! I have seen Tugarin the Dragon's Son. His stature is three fathoms, and the breadth across his shoulders is a full fathom; the space between his eyes is an arrow's length. The horse beneath him is like a wild beast; from his throat flames flash, from his ears smoke riseth in a pillar."

Then bold Alyosha Popovich bade the psalm-

singer yield his pilgrim garb, and receive Alyosha's heroic raiment in exchange. So the pilgrim refused not, but gave his garments to Alyosha, and put on the heroic raiment. And with speed did Alyosha array himself, as a wandering Kalyeka,[1] took the staff of fifty poods and a dagger of damascened steel, lest he should have need of it, and went to the Safat river. There he found Tugarin Dragon's Son, roaring in a huge voice: the green oaks trembled, and Alyosha could hardly walk for that roaring.

When young Tugarin beheld the pilgrim, he demanded of him, what he had seen or heard of young Alyosha, Pope's Son, for he would fain thrust him through with his lance, and burn him with fire.

Pilgrim Alyosha answered: "Come nearer; for I hear not what thou sayest." Then, when Tugarin drew near, Alyosha set himself against him, brandished his staff about his head, and smote Tugarin's tempestuous head, and broke it. Tugarin fell to the damp earth, and Alyosha sprang upon his black breast: whereupon young Tugarin besought him:

"Hail, thou wandering psalm-singer! Art thou not young Alyosha Popovich? If thou be he in very truth, let us now swear brotherhood."

But Alyosha trusted not his enemy. He smote off his turbulent head, drew off his flowered garments (their value was one hundred thousand roubles), put them all on himself, mounted his good steed, and set out for his white pavilion.

But when Akim and the pilgrim beheld him, they were sore afraid; they mounted their good steeds,

[1] Pilgrim, psalm-singing beggar: the professional singers of religious songs are known as *kalyeky perikozhie*, wandering psalm-singers.

and rode toward Rostof town. But young Alyosha followed and outrode them. When Akim Ivanovich saw that, he turned about, drew forth his battle-mace of thirty poods, and flung it behind him (for he thought from the garments it had been young Tugarin Dragon's Son), and struck Alyosha's white breast, thrusting him from his Cherkessian saddle.

Alyosha fell to the damp earth. Then Akim sprang down from his good steed, and would have pierced his white breast, but perceived thereon a wondrous cross of gold, and so said to the pilgrim:

"This thing hath come upon me for my sins—that I should slay mine own brother!" Then began they both to shake and rock Alyosha, and gave him liquor from beyond the sea; and therewith he became whole again, and they fell to converse among themselves, and to changing of raiment. The wandering psalm-singer put upon him once more his pilgrim's habit, Alyosha took again his heroic garments, and laid Tugarin the Dragon's Son's flowered apparel in his saddle-bags. Then they mounted their good steeds, and rode to Kief town to courteous Prince Vladimir.

When they came to the princely court, they lighted down from their good steeds, bound them to the oaken pillars, and entered the fair hall. There they prayed before the Saviour's picture, touched their foreheads to the ground, doing homage to Prince Vladimir, Princess Apraxia, and on all four sides. Courteous Prince Vladimir inquired their names and their country, and Alyosha made answer:

"Lord, I am called Alyosha Popovich: I come from Rostof, and am son to the aged pope of the cathedral."

Then Vladimir rejoiced, and said: "Hail,

young Alyosha Popovich! According to thy lineage, seat thyself in the great place, the fore corner; or in the second, the heroic place, on the oaken bench over against me; or in the third place, whereso-ever thou desirest."

Alyosha seated himself not in the great place, but with his comrade on the beam of the oven-bench. And after a little space, lo! twelve mighty heroes bare in Tugarin the Dragon's Son on a great sheet of pure gold,[1] and seated him in the great place beside the Princess Apraxia. Then they fetched sugar viands, honeyed drinks, and all foreign liquors, and all began to eat, drink, and make merry.

But Tugarin Dragon's Son ate not his bread with honour; he thrust a whole loaf into his cheek (and they were monastery loaves of vast size). And not with honour did Tugarin drink: he gulped a whole cup down at a swallow, and the measure of that cup was a bucket and a half.

Then spoke up bold Alyosha Popovich: "Ho there, courteous lord, Prince Vladimir! What lout is this that is come to the court, what untutored fool? For he sitteth not honourably at thy table, but layeth his hand upon the Princess Apraxia, kisseth her on her sugar mouth, and jeereth at thee, Prince. My lord and father had an old dog, that dragged himself with labour under the table, and choked himself with a bone. My father took him by the tail, and flung him out of the court-yard. And I will do the same to Tugarin."

Tugarin blackened like a night in autumn, and Alyosha was like the bright moon.

And again the cooks were cunning, and fetched

[1] Bodies have been found in the *kurgans* or mounds, between sheets of pure gold; but these belong to ancient Scythian times.

savoury viands and a white swan, which the Princess essayed to carve; and so doing, she cut her left hand. Then she wrapped it in her sleeve, let it hang beneath the table, and said: "Ah, ye heroes and nobles! Fain would I carve the white swan, were it not that I am still more fain to gaze upon this sweet youth, Tugarin Dragon's Son."

As she spoke, Tugarin seized the white swan, and suddenly swallowed it whole, and therewith yet another great round loaf. Alyosha said:

"Courteous Lord Vladimir! What boor and unpolished dullard is this that sitteth here? He thrusteth whole loaves into his cheek, and maketh but a mouthful of a white swan. My lord and father, Pope Feodor of Rostof, had a miserable old cow. With pain she dragged herself to the court-yard, and broke into the kitchen, where she drank a keg of spiced small beer,—and burst. Pope Feodor took her by the tail, and swung her upon the hill. So also will I do to Tugarin the Dragon's Son."

At this word, Tugarin turned black as an autumn night, plucked out his steel dagger, and flung it at Alyosha. But Alyosha was nimble, and Tugarin could not touch him. Akim Ivanovich seized the dagger, and said to Alyosha:

"Wilt thou cast it at him thyself, or dost thou command me to hurl it?"

"I will neither cast it, nor command thee. To-morrow I will meet him, I will lay a great wager with him—not of a hundred roubles, nor yet of a thousand; but my tempestuous head shall be my stake."

Then sprang all the princes and nobles to their nimble feet, and backed Tugarin. The princes staked a hundred roubles, the nobles fifty each, the peasants five. And the trading guests who chanced

there, staked on Tugarin all their three vessels, and all the foreign merchandise that stood on the swift Dnyepr. Alyosha's only backer was the ruler of Chernigof.

Then Tugarin rose in haste, went forth, mounted his good steed, spread his paper wings, and flew through the air.

The Princess Apraxia sprang to her nimble feet, and began to upbraid Alyosha Popovich.

"Thou villager, thou rustic lout! thou wouldest not let my sweet friend tarry!"

But Alyosha heeded not her words; he rose, and, having called his comrade, hastened forth.

They mounted, and rode to the Safat river, and pitched their white pavilions; preparing to rest, they loosed their horses in the green meadow. All that night Alyosha slept not, but besought God with tears: "Fashion, O God, a threatening cloud, send a cloud with rain and hail!"

Alyosha's prayers came to Christ the Lord. God sent the cloud, and wet Tugarin's paper wings, so that he fell like a dog upon the damp earth. Then Akim came and told Alyosha that he had seen Tugarin stretched upon the earth; and Alyosha arrayed himself with speed, mounted his good steed, took his sharp sword, and rode against Tugarin the Dragon's Son.

When Tugarin beheld Alyosha, he roared in a piercing voice: "Ho there, young Alyosha Popovich! Shall I burn thee with fire, or trample upon thee with my horse, or impale thee upon my lance?"

"Hail, young Tugarin Dragon's Son," Alyosha answered, "thou didst lay a great wager with me, to contend and fight in single combat; but now there is neither strength nor daring left in thee against me." Then, when Tugarin glanced behind him, Alyosha sprang forward with speed, and

hewed off his head. As the head fell upon the damp earth, it was like a beer-kettle.

Then Alyosha leaped from his good steed, uncoiled the cord from his horse, pierced Tugarin's ears, bound the head to his horse; and having brought it to Kief in this fashion, he flung it into the midst of the royal courtyard.

When Prince Vladimir beheld Alyosha, he entered his fair hall, seated himself at his richly decked table, and bade the banquet proceed for Alyosha.

After it had continued for a space, Prince Vladimir spoke: "Ho, young Alyosha Popovich! In one moment thou hast given me solace. Dwell henceforth in Kief town, I pray thee, and serve me, Prince Vladimir, and I will reward thee with love, and with all my heart."

This prayer bold young Alyosha Popovich disregarded not, and began to serve Vladimir with loyalty and truth.

But the Princess said: "Thou villager and rustic lout! Thou hast parted me and my dear friend, young Tugarin the Dragon's Son."

Thereto Alyosha made answer: "Little mother, Princess Apraxia, I had almost called thee then by the name which thou hast merited."

The One and Forty Pilgrims

ON the open plain many great and mighty heroes assembled, forty bogatyrs and one; and the one was young Kasyan Mikailovich, their ataman.

They halted in a green meadow, dismounted from their good steeds, and sat down in a circle to hold counsel together; and began to tell exploits.

They told whither one bold and goodly youth had journeyed, how a certain other had been in many lands and hordes, which one had slain the accursed Tatars, and which the infidels for ever accursed.

When young Kasyan Mikailovich heard the discourse of these mighty heroes, he addressed them thus: "Greatly have ye sinned against God, ye mighty warriors! For many turbulent heads have ye slain without avail, and have shed hot blood. Are ye therefore agreed to what I shall propose? Better is it for us now, to disperse our great host, and go to Jerusalem city to pray God in the holy sanctuary, to kiss the grave of the Lord, and to bathe in Jordan river, that our sins may be forgiven. But it behoveth us to lay upon ourselves a great vow, ye mighty heroes!—not to rob nor steal, not to yield to woman's charms, nor stain our knightly hands with blood.

"And if any shall offend against this vow, then

shall his nimble feet be hewn off at the knee, his white hands at the elbow; his clear eyes shall be plucked from his brow, and his tongue torn out with pincers; and he shall be buried to the breast in damp mother earth."

This in no wise terrified the heroes, and they all agreed thereto. Then they loosed their good steeds upon the silken grass, to roam the open plain, and donned palmer's weeds. Over their heroic shoulders they threw their beggar's pouches of black cut velvet, embroidered in red gold, and strewn with fair seed-pearls. On their heads they set caps from the Grecian land, and in their white hands they took staves of precious fishes' teeth.[1] Their raiment was like the poppy in hue, and each bore in his hand a precious antaventa stone. By day they journeyed by the fair sun's light; by night these stones, and the jewels woven into their foot-gear of the seven silks, lighted them on their way.

In this wise wandered the good youths from horde to horde, and so drew near to glorious Kief town. In the open plain they met the Fair Sun Prince Vladimir, hunting the white swan, geese, and small gray migratory ducks, foxes and hares, martens and sables black.

When Prince Vladimir drew near, the pilgrims shouted in piercing tones: "Vladimir, Prince of royal Kief! give alms to the wandering psalm-singers. We will not take a rouble, nor yet a rouble and a half; but whole thousands must thou give, yea, forty thousand well told!"

Then Prince Vladimir lighted down from his good steed, and greeted them, beseeching them to

[1] Walrus tusk: greatly esteemed in the Arkhangel Government, and used for fine carvings.

sing him the spiritual song of Elena, for he was fain to hear it from them.

So the pilgrims thrust their staves into the damp earth, and hung their pouches thereon, and standing in a circle, as is the custom with wandering psalm-singers, they sang the psalm of Elena in a half voice.

—Mother earth trembled, the water in the lakes surged, the gloomy forests shook, and on the mountains the damp oaks bowed. Vladimir could neither stand nor sit nor lie. "Enough of this psalm of Elena, good youths!" he cried. So the wandering psalm-singers took their velvet pouches, and made ready to pursue their journey.

Said Prince Vladimir then: "I have with me neither bread nor salt nor golden treasure. But go ye to Kief, to my Princess Apraxia; she will give you food and drink and lodging. Go, therefore, to my princely palace, and say that the Fair Sun Prince Vladimir sent you from the open plain."

So they journeyed a day, and yet another day, and came to glorious Kief town: there they sought the spacious courtyard of the palace, and besought alms for Christ's sake. At their piercing cry, the domes tumbled from the lofty castles, the crowns from the trees; mother earth quaked, and the liquors in the cellars grew thick.

The Princess Apraxia heard that great shout and thrust herself out of the lattice window to her waist, quivering exceedingly with terror. Then she sent the stewards and cupbearers to greet young Kasyan Mikailovich and his companions and bid them enter.

When the pilgrims mounted the fair porch, step bent to step, and the new antechamber sagged beneath their tread. They crossed themselves as enjoined, prayed before the Saviour's picture, did

reverence as prescribed to three sides and to four, and in particular to the Princess Apraxia.

The Princess bade them welcome, and commanded fair cloths to be laid on the oaken tables with all speed, sugar viands to be brought, and honeyed drinks. Then all sat down to meat: the pilgrims, the Princess Apraxia, with her nurses and duennas, and her fair handmaidens. Young Kasyan Mikailovich sat in the great place of honour, and from his youthful countenance as from the fair red sun, rays streamed. The stewards and cupbearers hastened to and fro, bearing fair meats and drinks.

They feasted long, even until the fair sun sank in the west. Then the pilgrims were led to chambers where they might repose; but the Princess Apraxia herself led young Kasyan to a fair chamber apart, where stood a couch of smooth boards with bed of down, heavy cushions, and a coverlet of rich black sables.

And when all were asleep in the palace, save young Kasyan who was praying God, the Princess Apraxia came to him, and told him of her love.

But young Kasyan recounted to her the great vow which he had taken, and bade her tempt him not, but go thence.

Nevertheless she came again, and yet the third time; then the good youth seized his stout cudgel and brandished it, and bade her begone, or he would smite her until she fell upon the brick floor. At that she was troubled, and went thence; but when Kasyan had fallen into a deep sleep, the Princess crept down from the glazed oven, took his pouch of rich velvet, ripped it open and placed therein the silver bratina,[1] from which the Prince

[1] A peculiar sort of bowl or loving-cup which was passed round the table at the beginning of a feast. These cups are

was wont to drink, on his return from the field; then she sewed up the velvet again so that it might not be perceived.

The next morning very early, the one and forty pilgrims arose, washed themselves very white, put on their shoes, and prayed to God. The Princess commanded the oaken tables to be served; and when the pilgrims had eaten and drunk their fill, they prayed God for the Fair Sun Prince Vladimir, returned thanks to the Princess Apraxia, swung their heroic pouches on their heroic shoulders, bowing low, and set out for Jerusalem.

A little space after their departure, Fair Sun Vladimir came from the open plain, and sat down to eat and drink. Then the cupbearers began to search for the royal bratina, through all the palace, and Vladimir said:

"Which of you hath taken the royal cup?"

The Princess Apraxia made answer in their stead: "Aï, Fair Sun Prince Vladimir! there came hither from the open plain, sent by thee, forty psalm-singers and one. Is it not they, perchance, who have carried off the royal cup? For they lodged here one night, and are but lately departed hence. They have taken thy royal cup!"

Then Prince Vladimir gave command in haste that his mighty heroes should ride after the pilgrims. But Ilya of Murom warned him:

"Aï, Fair Sun Vladimir! these be no wandering psalm-singers, but one and forty heroes bold, and whom have we to send against them?"

"Let us send bold Alyosha Popovich," quoth

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usually globular in form, with a lip like a band contracting inwards, which generally bears an inscription in Slavonic characters, such as: "Cup for going the round; pour into it that which refreshes the mind, corrupts the morals, and divulges all secrets"; "I am the slippery path of truth," etc.

Vladimir. So Alyosha was despatched, and bidden to speak them fair.

But Alyosha was not courteous by nature, and when he came up with them, and beheld them sitting, eating bread and refreshing themselves, he cried:

"Ho there! ye are not wandering psalm-singers, but forty thieves and robbers! Yield now peaceably the royal cup which ye have stolen!"

Then sprang young Kasyan Mikailovich to his nimble feet, grasped his travelling cudgel, and flourished it widely.

"Did we go to Kief town for your royal bratina?" quoth he. "Nay, but I will give thee the cup."

Alyosha beheld with great terror that there was nothing to be done, and, wheeling his good steed about in haste, returned again to Kief. To Prince Vladimir he said that the brigands had set upon him when he asked for the royal cup, and had nearly unhorsed him, so that he had escaped with difficulty.

Again spoke the old Kazák: "Heed not that daring fool Alyosha, Prince Vladimir! for I know well how he addressed them. There is none for us to send but Dobrynya Nikitich: lo! he knoweth how to petition with courtesy."

So Dobrynya gat to horse, and when he came upon the forty and one sitting on the open plain, eating and refreshing themselves, he cried:

"Hail, ye forty pilgrims and one! I beseech your hospitality."

"Come hither, good youth," they answered, "sit with us, eat our bread and salt."

"Aï, ye pilgrims," quoth Dobrynya: "how shall I tell you, good youths? There is a great tumult amongst us of Kief.—For the royal cup of

gold is lost; without it, the Prince will not taste his mead. I pray you, therefore, good youths, search your pouches, lest it may have strayed into them through error."

Then each looked upon the other, and knew not what to do. Said young Kasyan Mikailovich:

"Dear comrades, pious pilgrims! open your pouches, and show them to this youth."

All the pilgrims rose to their nimble feet, took their pouches, and showed to young Dobrynya: but the royal cup was not in them. Last of all, young Kasyan Mikailovich opened his pouch, and lo! the princely cup was there. Then all were exceeding wroth, and in great amaze, and said:

"What shall we do with thee now, young Kasyan Mikailovich? lo, it was thyself who didst impose that great vow."

"Beloved comrades," young Kasyan made answer, "I did not steal the royal cup: this thing hath the Princess Apraxia contrived because I would not yield to her. Nevertheless, do ye now the thing commanded, and break not your solemn vows."

Then they all wept and began to take leave of him; and though it was very grievous to them, they fulfilled their vow. They hewed off his nimble feet to the knee, his white arms to the elbow, plucked his clear eyes from his brow and his tongue from his mouth, and buried him to the breast in damp mother earth. Then they bade him farewell, as a dead man, and betook themselves to Jerusalem.

Young Dobrynya Nikitich looked on at all their deed, then rode thence with all speed, bearing the royal cup, and came to Kief town, to Prince Vladimir's spacious court, gave the cup to the Fair Sun, and related the marvel he had seen; and how

they had not stolen the royal cup, which was found upon them by mistake. But he told not what the Princess Apraxia had done. From that hour the Princess Apraxia fell ill with grief, and lay on the great dungheap. But Prince Vladimir and many of his heroes made ready to go and view that great marvel.

But before them came Mikola [1] of Mozhaisk to young Kasyan Mikailovich, and restored his nimble feet, his white hands, his clear eyes, and his tongue: he put breath also into Kasyan's white breast, set him on his nimble feet, and spake this word: "Go thy way, young Kasyan Mikailovich! thou shalt find thy friends at their first halting-place. The Lord hath sent me to thee, good youth, because thou wert wrongfully slain, not having stolen the royal cup. Go now to Jerusalem, pray God in the sanctuary, kiss the Lord's grave, bathe in Jordan river. And when thou art come again to this our land, build a cathedral church to Mikola of Mozhaisk; for I am he."

Then the hoary-headed old man vanished. Young Kasyan went his way, and overtook his companions late at night. He found them eating bread, and marvelling that they had executed him. But when they beheld him fairer than before, with his long curls hanging to his waist, and knew that the Lord and none other had been his help, they rejoiced with great joy.

When Prince Vladimir and his heroes came to the spot where Kasyan had been slain, and found the deep pit wherein he had been sunk to the breast, but found him not, they were in great amaze, and returned to Kief town.

After the forty pilgrim-heroes and one had made their pilgrimage to Jerusalem, they returned again

[1] St. Nicholas.

to where they had left their good steeds roaming, and rode to Kief town, to Fair Sun Vladimir's spacious court, where they asked alms in Christ's name, that they might have the wherewithal to dine.

Prince Vladimir heeded their mighty shout which shook the palace, and bade them enter, and eat his bread. But they answered:

"Nay, we will not enter thy palace, for the Princess Apraxia is there, and she will again lay the royal cup in our young Kasyan Mikailovich's pouch."

So they told Vladimir what the Princess had done when they had lodged there, and how the good youth whom they had slain, had nevertheless accompanied them to Jerusalem. Then Prince Vladimir sent his stewards and cupbearers to make obeisance to them and entreat them to enter.

When they obeyed, Prince Vladimir saluted young Kasyan courteously, and Kasyan inquired how it fared with the Princess Apraxia;—if she were well. Thereto Vladimir made reluctant answer, "Let us not go to her for a week or two." Young Kasyan heeded not his speech, but went straightway with the Prince to her chamber; and as they went the Prince held his nose, but Kasyan cared not for the odour. They opened the doors of the fair chamber, and flung wide the little lattice casements. The Princess prayed to be forgiven; thereupon young Kasyan breathed upon her with his holy breath, laid his holy hand upon her and pardoned her, and she was solaced; for she had suffered much, lying in shame a full half-year.

Then young Kasyan returned with Prince Vladimir to the banquet-hall, prayed before the Saviour's picture, and sat down with his comrades at the

richly adorned tables. They ate and drank and refreshed themselves; and when they would have pursued their journey, courteous Prince Vladimir besought them urgently to abide yet a day with him.

Young Princess Apraxia also came forth from her retreat, arrayed herself with speed, and adorned herself, and came to the table with her nurses, ladies in waiting and fair handmaidens. Young Kasyan she saluted without shame or confusion, though her sin lay in her mind, and Kasyan waved his small right hand over the sugar viands, hedging them about with the sign of the cross, and a blessing.

When all had feasted their fill, they saddled their good steeds, and having taken leave of courteous Prince Vladimir and of each other, they rode each to his own country.

And none of these forty heroes and one ever again roamed the open plain seeking adventures, nor stained their white hands with blood.

When young Kasyan Mikailovich came to his own land, he raised a cathedral church to Mikola of Mozhaisk, and began to pray constantly to God, and to repent of his sins.

Ilya in Disguise

ON a day, as Ilya rode in the open plain, he communed thus with himself: "Lo, I have been in many lands, but 'tis long since I was in Kief town; I will ride thither, and learn what is doing there."

When he came to the palace in the royal city, Prince Vladimir was holding a merry feast. Ilya entered straight the banquet hall, crossed himself as prescribed, did reverence as enjoined, bowing on all four sides, and to the Fair Sun Prince Vladimir and the Princess Apraxia in particular. But Vladimir knew him not.

"What is thy name and tribe?" he asked; "and what thy patronymic?"

And Ilya made answer: "Bright Vladimir, Fair little Sun! I am called Nikita from beyond the Forest."

"Ho there, thou brave and free little fellow! Sit down with us now, to eat bread and to feast: there is yet a little place yonder at the lower end of the table; the other places are filled. For prince-nobles, rulers, rich merchants and bold warrior-maids hold feast with me to-day, and sixty great Russian heroes."

The Old Kazák liked not this speech,—that he should break bread at the lower end of the table; and he said this word: "And ho, thou Fair Sun

Prince Vladimir! Thou eatest, feastest with the crows thyself, yet seatest me with the little crows? Nay! but I will not eat bread with nursling crows!"

This speech in turn pleased not the Fair Sun Prince. He sprang to his nimble feet, clouding over like the dusky night, and roared as he had been a wild beast.

"Ho there, ye mighty Russian heroes! Will ye hear yourselves called crows—yea, and little crows?—Seize the fellow, ye heroes, three by each arm; lead him into the spacious court, and there strike off his turbulent head."

They led him forth; but Ilya waved one hand, and three heroes lay dead; he waved the other hand, and the other three fell dead likewise.

Then Prince Vladimir commanded that twelve should seize him; and with them it fared the same. Then twelve grasped him, with six more behind; and these eighteen met their fate likewise, for Ilya's heroic heart burned within him when he was thus led out with ignominy.

He fitted an arrow to his stout bow. "Fly, my shaft, about the princely windows," he conjured it; "bear off all the golden spires, and the wonder-working crosses on God's temples."

Then he gathered up all the spires and crosses, went to the royal pot-house, sold the precious spires for countless treasure, and began to drink up the imperial roofs in green wine. He assembled also all the hangers-on of the pot-house, sots, and all who could drink green wine, led them into the kabak, and bade them help him drink the princely spires.

"What will the Prince do," said they, "when he knoweth that we are drinking his royal spires?"

"Drink, boon companions! care ye not for

that. To-morrow I shall reign as Prince in Kief town, and ye shall be my chiefs."

—Fair Sun Vladimir of royal Kief perceived that a great misfortune was at hand, and knew not who it might be that was come thus to town. But young Dobrynya Nikitich spoke up: "I know all the mighty heroes save one,—the Old Kazák Ilya of Murom. Of him I have heard that his death is not decreed in battle. This is no Nikita from beyond the Forest. It is Ilya of Murom. Thou hast not known, Vladimir, how to welcome thy guest on his coming, nor honour him at his going."

"Whom shall we send to bid him to an honourable feast?" said Vladimir in amaze. "Bold Alyosha Popovich will not know how to bid him, and Churilo Plenkovich is good for nothing but to strut among the maids and women. We must send a clever man, who can read and write, one whose discourse is reasonable. Go thou, therefore, Dobrynya Nikitich; beat thy forehead against the brick floor, against damp mother earth, before him, and say: 'Prince Vladimir hath sent me to thee, thou Old Kazák, Ilya of Murom, to bid thee to a worshipful feast. He knew thee not, good youth, and for that cause alone did he place thee at the lower end of the board to eat his bread. But now he entreateth thee to him with heartiness and great joy, and commands thee not to bear ill will for what is past. For thy place, which was the worst of all, shall now be the best, to wit, in the great corner.'"

Then Dobrynya thought within himself: "Shall I not go to sudden death at Ilya's hands? But if I obey not Fair Sun Prince Vladimir, it will fare ill with me."

So he betook himself to the imperial pot-house,

where sat Ilya of Murom drinking and carousing with the brawlers."

"It is better that I should approach him from behind!" thought Dobrynya. And so he did, and seized Ilya by his mighty shoulders, and delivered his message.

"Happy art thou, young Dobrynya Nikitich," quoth the Old Kazák, "in that thou camest upon me from behind. Hadst thou approached me from the front, thou shouldst have become ashes ere now! Now go, and say these words to thy Fair Sun Prince: 'Let strict ukases be promulgated throughout all the towns of Kief and Chernigof, that all the pot-houses and drinking places of whatever sort be opened freely for the space of three days, that all the people may drink green wine without price. And whoso drinketh no green wine, let him quaff the beer of drunkenness; and he who drinketh that not, sweet mead; that all may know that the Old Kazák Ilya of Murom is come to famous Kief town.' Let this be done, and let an honourable banquet be made, or the Prince shall reign no longer than until to-morrow's morn!"

Then quickly, quickly, very, very quickly and with speed ran Dobrynya to Prince Vladimir, and quickly, very, very quickly were the stern ukases issued, and a mighty banquet prepared.

And vast multitudes assembled in the pot-houses, not to eat or drink, but to view the Old Kazák.

When Ilya came to the princely palace, he did reverence to all, and to the Prince and Princess in particular. Then Vladimir rose to his nimble feet, and spoke: "Ho there, thou Old Kazák Ilya of Murom! Here is a place for thee beside me, either on my right hand or my left, and yet a third

place—wherever it pleaseth thee to sit." Therewith he took Ilya by his white hands, and kissed him on his sugar mouth.

And as they sat on the four-square stools about the oaken tables laden with sweet viands, Ilya took not the highest place, but a lesser, and put the sots from the imperial pot-house about him. And they began to eat and drink and make merry.

Thus was Ilya reconciled to courteous Prince Vladimir.

Dobrynya the Dragon-Slayer, and Marina

FROM far, very far in the open plain, and farther yet in the valley, fled the herd of beasts, of wild beasts and serpents: at their head ran the Skiper-beast, with woolly hide, crumpled horns, and little hoofs of steel. The Skiper-beast fled to the Dnyepr river, and all the Dnyepr's waters were troubled. Its fair steep banks quaked, the delicate tree-tops fell to the earth in concert, brothers, when they heard of that birth.—For in Holy Russia the Rich, young Dobrynya[1] Nikitich was born that day.

When Dobrynya grew to man's estate, three years he feasted, three years he served as steward, three more he stood as keeper at the gate. Yet no fair word did he win of Vladimir, or soft bread, but only a good steed.

In the tenth year, courteous Prince Vladimir made a great feast in royal Kief town, whereat many heroes and bold warrior-maidens were assembled, eating and drinking merrily. Young Dobrynya Nikitich sat at the end of the oaken board, and spoke:

"Fair Sun Vladimir of royal Kief! I have served thee long in thy princely court: grant me leave now to wander about Kief, through its narrow lanes."

[1] Dobrynya is partly historical. See Appendix.

"Fly not forth, young sparrow," answered Prince Vladimir, "young Dobrynya, gallop not away."

But all the mighty Russian heroes said: "Go crave permission of the honourable widow, Afimya Alexandrevna, thy mother, to prowl about the narrow lanes of Kief."

This Dobrynya did, and his mother counselled him: "Walk through all the streets of Kief town, roam the little alleys at thy will; only, go not to the vile Princess Marina Ignatievna, who dwelleth in a certain little lane. She is a witch, she hath murdered Prince on Prince, many Kings and Crown Princes, nine Russian heroes, clear falcons all, and common folk without number. If thou goest to that Marina, thou wilt lose thy life, Dobrynya."

The next day Dobrynya rose right early, washed himself very white in spring water, took his stout bow, his quiver of fiery arrows, and set out. As he wandered through the streets and many narrow lanes, he shot small sparrows on the halls, blue doves upon the chambers, and so wandering, came at length to Marina's lane. Her palace was richly adorned. In her window sat a dark-blue dove and his mate cooing, yellow bill to bill, and mouth to mouth, with wing enfolding wing; and it pleased not Dobrynya that they should sit thus. He strung a silken cord to his bow, and fitted thereto a flaming arrow, and shot at the dove and his mate. The cord sang on the stout bow, but his left foot slipped, his right hand trembled—the arrow struck not the dove and mate, but flew straight to the lofty palace, through the lattice window to Marinushka the Vile, and slew Tugarin Dragon's Son her dear friend who was with her there.

Dobrynya reflected:—"If I enter that palace

I shall lose my head; if I enter not—my arrow." Then he sent his trusty servant, his page, for the arrow. "Thou miscreant, Marina! give back our burning arrow," quoth the page. But Marina said: "Nay, let him who shot the arrow come himself." Thereupon Dobrynya entered with haste the spacious court, and with courtesy the new halls: fairly came he into the new chamber, and took his fiery arrow.

Marina lay upon a couch; in her right hand was a fiery dragon; on her left, two little serpents. She took Dobrynya by his white hand, by his silver ring, kissed his sugar mouth, and said:

"Ah, sweet Dobrynya Nikitich, give me thy love!" Dobrynya made answer: "Sweet Marinushka Ignatievna, I will not! Thou hast slain nine mighty Russian heroes, and art minded to slay me likewise." Then he turned from the new chamber, and went forth into the spacious court, and so home to his mother.

Up sprang Marinushka then, seized her dagger, and hacked Dobrynya's footsteps, flung them into the oven painted with many devices, and conjured them with a powerful incantation: "Burn, ye footsteps of Dobrynya, burn, in this oven of many hues; and may his spirit likewise burn within him for me! As I cut these footsteps, may Dobrynya's dear little heart cut for me!" [1]

Then worse than a sharp knife cut Dobrynya's heroic heart. That evening he ate nothing, at midnight he slumbered not, and waited only for the white dawn.

Early rang the matin bells, and very early he arose, girt on his sharp sword, and went to the

[1] The "charm of footsteps" practised by the ancient Germans is still employed in a slightly different form among the Burmese.

cathedral to the service; and thence to Marina's dwelling.

When he came to the Princess, he bowed low before her; but she rose not, sat in discourteous wise, and returned not his salutation.

"Ah, sweet Marinushka, give me thy love!" he said.

"What need is there for thee, young Dobrynya, to jest and make merry over me? Long since I sought thy love, and thou lovedst me not:—and now thou cravest it of me! Now thou art in my hands! If I will, I can turn thee into a magpie, a raven, a pig, or an aurochs with golden horns, silver hoofs and velvet hide, or into a frog of the under world;—and from that last estate there is no return for ever."

Then she transformed him into a brown aurochs, and sent him forth into the open plain, to drink swamp water and to eat marsh grass, to be chief over the nine brown aurochs who roamed there—the mighty heroes her bridegrooms.

And as Dobrynya roamed there, a golden-horned aurochs, he espied a flock of geese, which belonged to Avdotya Ivanovna, his beloved aunt. All these did he trample under foot to the last gosling, not one did he leave. Then the goose-herds came and made complaint.

"Aï, young Avdotya Ivanovna! an aurochs with golden horns hath trampled under foot all our geese; not one hath he left us." After them followed the keepers of the swans, the shepherds and herdsmen, with the same complaint. Not a living creature of all their flocks and herds had the golden aurochs spared. Then Avdotya Ivanovna spoke:

"That aurochs of the golden horns is my well-beloved nephew, young Dobrynya, whom Marina

the Vile hath transformed." But when the guardians of the horses came and told how the aurochs had dispersed their charge over all the plain, sparing none, Avdotya rose in wrath. She turned herself into a magpie, and flew to Marina the Vile, perched in her little lattice window, and began to scold, and say: "Vile Princess Marinushka! why hast thou transformed Dobrynya into a golden-horned aurochs, and loosed him to roam the open plain? Turn back Dobrynya from his aurochs form, else will I turn thee into a long-tailed dog, and the children shall pursue thee;—into a magpie, and thou shalt hover evermore above the open plain in semblance of a pie."

Then Marina perceived that there was no help, and so transformed herself into a gray swallow, flew to the open plain, and alighting upon the aurochs' golden horns chattered and said: "Swear to me, Dobrynya Nikitich—for thou hast roamed the field and art weary, the bubbling marshes and art tired—swear now a great oath to take the golden crown with me, with Marinushka, and I will turn thee back from a golden-horned aurochs to thine own shape again."

"Ah, sweet Marinushka!" Dobrynya answered, "only turn me from this form, and I will take that great oath. I will wed thee, Marina, and will even give thee the little lessons wherewith a husband instructeth his wife."

Then Marina believed him, and turned him into a goodly youth as of old.

"Now I must wed thee about a bush, Marinushka," he said, "about a willow bush in the open plain." So three times about the willow bush they paced, and Dobrynya called Marina his wife,[1] and set out with her for royal Kief town.

[1] See Appendix: *Dobrynya the Dragon-slayer.*

When they were come to Marina's lofty palace, Dobrynya commanded the servant :

" Aï, my trusty servant ! prithee a cup of green wine ; yet give me first a sharp sword."

Then Marina turned him into a little ermine, and began to frighten him ; but the ermine escaped her snares. Then she turned him into a falcon, and began to alarm and to tease the falcon, which waved his wings, and besought the Princess Marina :

" I cannot fly as a falcon should, I can only wave my wings ; grant me to drain a cup of green wine."

The young Princess thereupon transformed him into a goodly youth, and Dobrynya shouted :

" Ho there, my trusty servant ! a cup of green wine ! "

But the trusty servant gave him very quickly a sharp sword. The cup of wine he quaffed not, but brandished his sword, and cut off Marina's turbulent head for her ungentle deeds.

In the morning he went to his warm steam bath, and thither came princes and nobles.

" Hail, Dobrynya Nikitich, with thy bride ! " they said.

" Hail, ye princes and nobles and all the Court of Vladimir ! Last night I was wedded, brothers, and no longer alone, but now I am single and no longer wedded. I have cut off Marina's turbulent head for her ruthless deeds ; for she had slain many Russian people, Princes and their heirs, Kings and Crown Princes, nine mighty Russian heroes, and of common folk an innumerable host ! "

Ivan Godinovich

IN Kief town dwelt a great and mighty hero, Ivan Godinovich,[1] nephew to Prince Vladimir. Long he roamed through many infidel lands; many great hosts did he assemble, frightened Tzars and slew warriors.

Upon a certain day, courteous Prince Vladimir made a great supper, whereat sat many honourable widows. Ivan Godinovich sat with eyes fixed upon the floor, eating nothing, drinking nothing, tasting not the white swan.

"Ho there, Ivanushka!" spoke Prince Vladimir. "Wherefore art thou sad? Is not thy seat to thy liking? Have I passed thee by with the cup of drunkenness? Hath the fool scoffed at thee, hath a black raven cawed at thee, or have the dogs barked?"

"None of these things have come to pass, Fair Sun Prince Vladimir," Ivanushka replied. "But all in Kief town are wedded: I only sit alone."

"Why then dost thou not wed likewise, Ivan Godinovich?"

"Fain would I wed, lord, but that may not be. Where I would take, there I am refused: and where they would give, I will not take."

Then spoke courteous Prince Vladimir: "Ho there, Ivan! Sit thou on this folding-chair, and write a letter."

[1] See Appendix.

So Ivan sat upon the folding-chair, and wrote a letter of wooing to Dmitry the rich merchant in Chernigof town; and Vladimir the Prince set his hand to it. "'Tis not thou, Ivan Godinovich, who now goest a-wooing:—'tis I, Prince Vladimir, who woo."

Then quickly did Ivan array himself, and quickly, very, very quickly and with speed did he ride to Chernigof town, one hundred and eighty versts by measurement: that space Ivan compassed in two hours. When he came to the courtyard of Dmitry the Merchant, he leaped from his good steed and bound him to the oaken pillar. Then he entered the fair hall, prayed before the Saviour's picture, did reverence to Merchant Dmitry, and laid the letter upon the round table.

Guest [1] Dmitry broke the seal, looked upon it and read it.

"Foolish Ivan! Senseless Ivan!" quoth he. "Thou art not the first, Ivanushka! My Avdotya is now betrothed to Tzar Koschei of a distant land. If I give her to a Tzar, she will be a Tzaritza, and all the nobles will bow before her in homage; but if I give her to thee, she will be a serf, and must sweep the cottage and clean the stable. But I have a dog in my courtyard; her will I give to thee."

Then was Ivan grieved: he seized the letter and ran forth, mounted his good steed, and hastened with what speed he might, to Kief, and told Prince Vladimir all that had passed.

When Prince Vladimir heard how Ivan had been

[1] The ancient name for a merchant of the highest class. In the time of Ivan the Terrible, according to the Code, a Guest received damages to the extent of 50 roubles for an insult, a common merchant 5 r., a boyarin 600 r. The comparative rank indicated had long prevailed, probably from Vladimir's day.

scorned, he was grieved for Ivanushka's sake, tore the black curls [1] from his head, and cast them upon the brick floor. "Take her not, Ivan," he said.

Then was Ivan wroth, and departed from the oaken tables, from the cloths richly patterned with drawn-work; leave took he of none, but opened the doors very wide and shut them very hard, thrusting the door-posts aside.

"Ho there, Ivan Godinovich!" cried courteous Prince Vladimir then, "Take a hundred of my men, and a second hundred of the princely nobles, and yet a third hundred of thine own. Go in honour to woo, and if they give not the maid willingly, then take her by force."

In haste did the youths assemble, and prepare for their journey. They had but passed the swift Dnyepr when a powdering of white snow fell, and upon this light, pure snow they beheld traces of three beasts. The first trace was of a brown aurochs, the second of a fierce lion, the third of a wild boar. Then Ivan began to tell off the youths in companies. He sent a hundred men after the brown aurochs, commanding them to take him with care and without bloody wounds; another hundred sent he in pursuit of the fierce lion, and a third hundred after the wild boar,—these likewise must be taken heedfully and without disfiguring wounds, and borne to royal Kief, to great Prince Vladimir.

But Ivan himself went on alone to Chernigof town, rode into the midst of Guest Dmitry's spacious court, and bound his good steed to the oaken pillar. Then he entered the fair chamber, and prayed before the Saviour's picture, but did no reverence to Dmitry the rich merchant. With

[1] Vladimir's hair is sometimes black, though generally golden.

Dmitry were sitting then divers of the Tatar body-guard,[1] who had brought a garment, in value one hundred thousand roubles, from the Tzar Koschei to his love Avdotya Dmitrievna.—The Tzar himself was but three versts from Chernigof, and with him was a host of three thousand men.

"Give me thy daughter," spoke Ivan Godinovich.

"Thou shalt have the dog in my courtyard," Dmitry made answer as before.

"I shall neither ask thee much nor long dispute," said Ivan; and thereupon he rose from the hewn wall bench, pushed aside the silken hangings, and so came into the new hall where sat the White Swan weaving linen. "Hail, Avdotya the White Swan!" he said in greeting. Upon Avdotya's head were white swans, on her left shoulder black sables; on her right shoulder sat bright falcons; on the frame of her loom perched dark blue doves, and on her loom-bench, black ravens: and her face was like the first fair snows of autumn.

"And hail to thee, fair Ivan Godinovich," she answered; then left her delicate linen, took Ivan by his white hands, kissed his sugar lips, and fondled him.

Then Ivan delayed no longer, but led Avdotya forth to the fair hall. There she began to weep and to say: "Thou hast known, my father, how to feed me and give me drink, to cherish me until I had attained my growth: but one thing, my father, thou hast not known—how to give me in marriage without great bloodshed!"

To this the Chernigovian made reply: "Wilt thou not eat bread and salt with me, Ivanushka Godinovich?"[2]

[1] Ulani.

[2] "Bread and salt" is the epic euphuism for hospitality.

"Thou hast not refreshed the guest at his coming," quoth Ivan, "and at his going it shall not be permitted to thee."

Said Dmitry: "I have written a letter to Koschei the Deathless, and have thereto set my hand, and he shall cut off thy turbulent head."

"When Koschei cutteth off my head," quoth Ivan, "then will be the fitting hour to boast, both for him and for thee."

Then he set Avdotya on his good steed, and rode forth upon the open plain. After they had forded many streams, night overtook them on the plain; and Ivan pitched a pavilion of white damask linen for himself and his Avdotya.

Now when the news came to Koschei, he went forth to the stable-yard, took a foal with nine chains, put on him heroic trappings, girded on his broad sword, took his sharp spear and his battle-mace, seized on the way his steel dagger, and rode forth over the plain until he came to Chernigof. There he learned that Ivan Godinovich had in truth carried off Avdotya the White Swan, and he rode in pursuit.

When he espied the pavilion of white damask, he shouted in a piercing voice: "Dwelleth there any in this pavilion of fine damask? Let him who is alive therein, come forth!"

Ivan heard this, and roused himself, good youth, from sleep, came forth, and washed himself with fresh spring water, dried himself upon a towel of fine damask, crossed himself as prescribed, did reverence as enjoined, and prayed to the most wondrous Saviour. Then he mounted his good steed, took his arms, and rode at Koschei. The adversaries went apart about the space of three versts, and when they came together they greeted each other, and smote each other with their Tatar

spears, but yet pierced one another not. Again they rode aside about three versts, came at each other, saluted courteously and brandished their battle-maces.

Ivan's mace fell upon Koschei's head, and Koschei flew from his good steed. Ivanushka was cunning: he leaped over his good steed's mane to the earth, hurled himself upon Koschei's black breast, undid the silken loops, unfastened the buttons of pure gold, and would have pierced his black breast, and taken out his restive heart with his liver. But he had forgotten his dagger of damascened steel, and shouted with a great voice: "Ho there, my White Swan Avdotya! Throw my steel dagger from the white pavilion: I must needs prick Koschei's black breast, and draw forth his restive heart."

Avdotya obeyed his behest, and fetched the dagger. But when Koschei espied her, he spoke this word:

"Bethink thee, Avdotya the White Swan! If thou livest with Ivan thou wilt be a servant, and must bow in lowly reverence before all men: but I will make thee a Tzaritza. Many lands shall do homage to thee, and all nobles shall do reverence to thee. Do thou therefore seize Ivan by his ruddy curls, and drag him from my breast."

And Avdotya listened to his counsel. She flung the dagger far out upon the plain, seized Ivan by his ruddy curls, and dragged him aside; and so Koschei got the upper hand. As he sat upon Ivan's white breast he opened his garments, and would have taken out his restive heart, and his liver, with his dagger which he snatched from its sheath.

But Avdotya had compassion on Ivanushka, and said:

" Pierce not Ivan's white breast, Koschei, pluck not his restive heart therefrom. Let us rather bind him with this three-stranded cord to yon damp, ringbarked oak." And they did so.

As Koschei came forth from the white pavilion, very early the next morning, two dark blue doves alighted upon the damp oak; and he told Avdotya.

" Shoot me those dark blue doves," quoth the White Swan, " for I would fain eat of them."

Koschei hearkened to her, fitted a sharp burning arrow to his bow, and conjured it:

" Fall not, my arrow, in the water or upon the damp earth; but fall, my shaft, upon the damp oak tree, and into the right eye of the blue dove thereon."

But Ivan conjured in his turn: " O stout bow, clear burning mother arrow! fall not to earth, strike not the dove; but bound back from this damp oak, and pierce Koschei's black breast, drag forth his royal heart, to the discontent of old crones, and the cawing of black crows."

So the arrow did, and attained Koschei's impetuous heart; and thus died Koschei the Deathless.[1]

Then Avdotya bethought herself once more and wept. " Long is woman's hair," she said, " but short, in sooth, are her wits! I have deserted one shore, yet attained not unto the other. I will slay Ivan, and go back to Chernigof a maid."

Thereupon she took the sharp sword from where it lay upon damp mother earth. But Ivanushka began to entreat her: " Aï, Avdotya, my White Swan! unbind me now from the damp oak!"

[1] Koschei is merely one of the incarnations of the dark spirit. His " death " is generally concealed in some object remote from him, which it is necessary to destroy. He frequently figures in the *skazkas* (tales), and occasionally dies, as in this case; though always called the " Deathless." Specimens of these tales may be found in W. R. S. Ralston's *Russian Folk-lore*.

"Wilt thou take me for thy wife, young Ivan Godinovich? If thou wilt swear it, I will sever the silken bonds upon thy white hands. But if thou wilt not swear it, I will give thee over to speedy death."

Then Ivan spoke firmly as he lay upon the damp earth:

"Release me, and I will neither beat thee, nor impute to thee great blame. I will but read thee three lessons meet for a wife."

Yet Avdotya was afraid, and would still have cut off Ivan's turbulent head, with her sharp sword. But her white hands trembled; and the sword fell not upon Ivan's white throat, but upon the silken cords, and severed them.

Then the good youth rose up at liberty, placed Avdotya upon his good steed, and rode over the open plain.

"Alight now at the ford, Avdotya my White Swan," he said: "pull off my morocco boot and fetch me fresh water therein, for I would fain drink at this spot."

Avdotya answered him: "Thou carest not to drink, Ivanushka Godinovich, but only to slay me!"

This seemed to Ivanushka a grief and a great evil; so he hewed off Avdotya's arms to the elbow, for her first wifely lesson: "I need not these," quoth he; "they have embraced Koschei." For his second lesson he cut off her lips, saying: "These I need not: they have kissed Koschei." And for the third lesson, he smote off her feet to the knee: "Of these I have no need," quoth he: "they bore thee from my white pavilion to drag Ivan by his ruddy curls."

Last of all, he cut off her turbulent head.

Then he washed his sword in the Dnyepr river,

and rode to Kief town, where all the mighty heroes came forth to meet him.

Alyosha Popovich laughed in his face:

"Hail, Ivanushka!" said he. "Thou art wedded? But thou hast no companion with whom to dwell."

And Ivan Godinovich replied:

"I have wedded my sharp sword!"

Dobrynya and the Adventure of the Pavilion

AS young Dobrynya Nikitich roamed the open plain on a day, he came to a damp oak, whereon sat a black raven. Dobrynya drew his bow from its case, fitted to the cord a flaming arrow, and made ready to shoot the raven. But the bird addressed him in human language :

" Now aï, Dobrynya Nikitich ! Slay me not, and I will reveal all things to thee. The children in the streets have a proverb : ' In killing a gray-beard there is no salvation, and none shall receive profit from shooting a raven.' With the blue plumes of a raven may no man solace himself, and my flesh thou canst not eat."

Half the raven's wings were white ; and he said :

" Aï, Dobrynya Nikitich ! Go thou to the lofty mountain ; for there be three wondrous marvels, three marvellous damsels. The first is a wonder of white whiteness, the second is redly beautiful, the third a black marvel of darkness."

Dobrynya reflected then in haste, and replied to the raven : " What thou hast said of the old man and the raven is true." Then he put aside his dart, and thought : " Better is it that I should go to the lofty mountain, to yon steep hill, and view those three wondrous marvels, those three marvellous damsels."

So he turned his good steed in haste, quickly, quickly, very, very quickly, and with speed, and rode to that lofty mountain. And as he gazed about him, lo! there stood a pavilion of white linen. On the pavilion was a lock of damascened steel, and upon the lock this writing: "Whoso entereth this pavilion, shall not issue thence alive."

Dobrynya's heroic heart burned within him when he read that, and he smote the lock with his fist, so that the lock fell upon the damp earth. Within the pavilion, he beheld tables set and viands thereon, and he entered. Much as the youth ate and drank, even more did he fling upon the ground, pour out and trample under foot.

Then the youth lay down to sleep, and as he slept and took his ease, he wist not of the peril hanging over him.

From afar in the open plain came Alyosha Popovich riding, and gazed upon that sight. More had been cast down, poured out and trampled under foot, than had been eaten. Then was Alyosha very wroth, and his heroic heart burned within him. He grasped his sharp-pointed spear, and would have pierced Dobrynya's white breast; but he reflected:

"No honour shall I win, nor youthful praise, if I slay a sleeping man, who is no better than a dead one. Rather will I mount Dobrynya's good steed, and fight and contend with this Dobrynya on his own good steed."

So Alyosha mounted, and smote Dobrynya with the butt end of his spear. Thereupon the hero awakened from his sleep, and sprang quickly forth in his fine white shirt without a girdle, and without his shoes, grasped his heroic mace, and they two began to fight. Dobrynya leaped about on foot,

but Alyosha rode Dobrynya's good steed. All day they contended eating nothing, all day they fought drinking nothing. Two more days and nights they fought.

Then came a clap of thunder, and mother earth began to quiver. When Ilya of Murom the Old Kazák heard that, he pondered: "'Tis Russian heroes in battle. Where contend they now, and fight?"

In haste he saddled his good steed, Cloudfall, with girth upon girth, saddlecloth on saddlecloth, felt on felt, and over all his little Cherkessian saddle, with its girth of silk, saying to himself: "Not for dainty beauty is this, brothers, but for heroic strength."—They saw the good youth as he mounted, as he rode they saw him not nor knew whither his course was directed.

When Ilya came to the lofty mountain, he beheld young Dobrynya and bold Alyosha in combat. Then he seized Dobrynya in his right hand, bold Alyosha in his left, and shouted at the top of his voice: "Why contend ye, mighty Russian heroes?"

Alyosha answered: "Ah, thou Old Kazák, Ilya of Murom! How could I refrain from fighting? The tables were all laid in my pavilion, and viands set thereon; and this Dobrynya Nikitich cast to the earth and trampled under foot as much as he ate and drank, so that I was ashamed for the youth."

"I thank thee, Alyosha," spoke Ilya, "for defending thine own." And to Dobrynya he said: "And thou, Dobrynya Nikitich, my cross-brother in arms, why contendest thou?"

"Ilya of Murom, my brother in arms, Old Kazák! How was it possible not to fight? For this dog and robber had a lying inscription written:

'Whoso entereth this pavilion shall not issue thence alive,' and I desired to remain alive."

"I thank thee, Dobrynya," quoth the Old Kazák, "for that thou hast entered boldly into the dwelling of a stranger."

And yet more said little Ilya:

"Calm now your heroic hearts, and call each other brother in arms, and swear brotherhood, with exchanging of crosses." Then he flattered and persuaded them, and they began not again to fight and contend, but swore brotherhood on the cross: Dobrynya called himself the elder brother, and Alyosha called himself the younger. And so they parted and came to Kief town.

Churilo Plenkovich, the Fop

IN royal Kief town, courteous Prince Vladimir held a great feast. The day declined, the feast waxed merry, and Prince Vladimir solaced himself greatly. Then strange people thrust themselves into his presence,—one hundred young men, and a second hundred and yet a third of bold youths. All were beaten and wounded, their turbulent heads all bruised with cudgels and bound about with their girdles. They touched their foreheads to the earth, and made complaint:

"Our light, our lord, Prince Vladimir! As we rode upon the plain, beside Soroga river, across the royal fens, we found no living thing: neither fierce roving beast nor flying bird. We found but three hundred youths; their steeds were Latinsky,[1] their kaftans of damask, their surcoats of scarlet, their caps had golden crowns. They set snares of silk in thy pine forests for the black sables and the martens, drove the foxes and the white foreign hares from their burrows: they shot the aurochs and stag, and us they beat and wounded. And thou, lord, hast no booty and we no guerdon, and our wives and children are deprived of their protectors;—for we must wander through the world, for lack of food."

[1] General name for any thing from Western Europe, where the *Latin* faith prevailed, in contradistinction to "Orthodox" Russia.

Vladimir, prince of royal Kief town, ate, drank, and made merry, and heeded not their petition. And this host had not departed from the court when another host arrived, three hundred youths, five hundred youths, all fishermen, all beaten and wounded sore, their tempestuous heads bound with girdles, for the cudgel blows. They also did lowly reverence to bright Prince Vladimir, and made complaint, in like fashion to the first. They had traversed the lakes and rivers and royal ponds, and had taken nothing, but had espied five hundred youths catching white-fish, pikes, carps, and lesser fishes, so that the Prince could get nothing. They, receiving therefore no payment save a cudgelling from those bold youths, would be forced to roam the world for a livelihood.

To this complaint Vladimir paid no more heed than to the first, but continued to eat, drink, and make merry. This company had not quitted the courtyard when two more appeared, the royal falconers and hawkers, with their turbulent heads all broken and bound up. These made complaint that in all the open plains, royal fens and pleasure isles, they could espy neither hawk nor falcon, nor aught but a thousand men, who rode hither and thither, catching bright sparrow-hawks and white noble falcons. And these men, who had assaulted and wounded the royal falconers, were called Churilo's [1] body-guard.

While the falconers still stood in the royal presence, came merchants and gardeners, and told how Churilo's wild guards had plucked up all their garlic and onions, broken all their white cabbages, and insulted all the young damsels and the young men of Kief.

This word touched Prince Vladimir, and he

[1] See Appendix.

inquired of them: "Who is this Churilo?" Old Bermyag Vasilievich stepped forth.

"Lord, I have known Churilo this long while; he dwelleth not in Kief, but in Little Kief.[1] His palace covereth seven versts; about it standeth an iron fence; upon each paling thereof is a knob, and that knob is a pure, round pearl. In the midst of the courtyard stand halls, chambers of white oak, hung with gray beaver skins; and the ceilings thereof are hung with black sables, and the centre beam is covered with leather. The floor of his own bower, the space about the oven, is of pure silver, the hooks and hasps of damascened steel. His first gates are of carven oak, the second all crystal, the third of tin. All his thresholds are of precious fishes' teeth, and all his ovens of tiles."

When Vladimir heard that, he arrayed himself in haste, and commanded a journey. With him he took his Princess, his nobles and mighty heroes, Dobrynya Nikitich, and old Bermyag Vasilievich, summoned five hundred men, and set out for Churilo Plenkovich's court.

Old Plenko came to meet them. For the Prince and Princess he opened his gates of carved work, for the princes and nobles those of crystal, for the common folk the tin. Then old Plenko the silk-merchant led Vladimir and the Princess Apraxia to a richly patterned chamber, to another of crystal, and a third of lattice work, and so to the golden-domed tower where all was heavenly with sun and moon, stars innumerable and white dawns.

In the fair hall he seated them at tables richly decked, and assigned fitting places to the princes and nobles. Then the cunning cooks fetched sweet viands and mead, and all sorts of liquors

[1] In modern times a place near Kief has been known by the name of Churilovshina.

from beyond the sea, to give mirth to the princes. Joyful was their converse, and cheerful the day.

Prince Vladimir pulled aside the little lattice window by which he sat with his Princess; and as they gazed forth upon the open plain, they saw a hundred good youths come riding from afar, from mother Soroga river.

The youths' good steeds were all of one matched colour, their bits alike of bronze, their kaftans all of scarlet cloth with streaming girdles. The shoes upon their feet were of green morocco, the tips awl-like, the heels sharp; under the heels small sparrows might hop and flutter, over the insteps, an egg might roll.

Then Prince Vladimir inquired of Plenko whether it were his son thus riding, and the old silk-merchant made answer, smiling:

"Nay, these be Churilo's cooks, who make his green wine."

When that throng had entered the court, another of five hundred came riding from the plain, all mounted alike and apparelled.

Again Vladimir inquired of Plenko whether this might be Churilo and his guard; and old Plenko made answer that these were but Churilo's stewards who served his table. When this troop had entered, a third a thousand strong came from afar, and in their midst a goodly youth, fairer than they all. His locks were like a field of gold with silvery sheen, his neck like the white snows; his cheeks outdid the poppy in hue; like the clear falcon's gleamed his eyes, his brows were like black sables, his little feet were wondrous small:—their traces on fresh fallen snow could not be told from those of the white ermine or the hare. Beneath his mantle of rich sables, he was clad in green samite,

with carven buttons of red gold, in fashion like to apples of Siberia.

Lightly rode that host; beneath them the soft grass bent not, the azure flowerets broke not.

From horse to horse sprang that fair youth, from the third horse and past the fourth, hurling high his spear to heaven, as it had been a swan's feather, and catching it hand over hand: as he leaped also, he snatched the good youths' caps from their heads, and placed them upon others.

"A misfortune hath come upon me for my sins!" cried Prince Vladimir. "Lo! I am far from home, and there rideth hither to me a King from the horde, or some threatening ambassador, to sue for my fair niece Beauty.[1]

But old Plenko poured him a cup of wine, saying: "Fear not, Prince Vladimir! 'Tis but my son Churilo with his guard. When he shall stand before thee, lord, this feast will be but half a feast, this banquet will seem but poor."

Then all began again to eat and drink and make merry, sitting without thought or care. In the court the white day had drawn to even, the fair red sun was sunk in the west, ere Churilo arrived. Yet before him was borne a canopy, that the sun might not scorch his white face.

Old Plenko went forth upon the railed balcony behind the hall, and cried: "Aï, Churilo Plenkovich! thou hast here in thy hall a much-loved guest, Fair Sun Vladimir of royal Kief. What wilt thou now set before him, what gifts bestow upon him?"

Now Churilo was quick-witted and crafty. He took his golden keys, went to his iron-bound coffers, and drew thence great treasure of black sables, and a mantle of precious sables, soft and feathery

[1] Zabava or Zapava.

beneath rich samite from beyond the sea, for Prince Vladimir, fine white damask, in value a hundred thousand roubles, for the Princess Apraxia. To each noble he gave little foxes of the cavern, to every merchant, marten skins, and to the common folk, much gold.

Vladimir accepted these gifts, and said :

" Though the complaints against Churilo were many, yet are his offerings still greater. And now I will not give judgment against him."

And to Churilo he said : " Young Churilo Plenkovich, it is not fitting that thou shouldst dwell in the country. Wilt thou not come to Kief, and serve me as a seneschal and cupbearer ? "

Though some buy off misfortune, Churilo purchased ill-luck at great cost. Yet he rebelled not, but ordered them to saddle his steed in haste, and all rode back to Kief, so that all maids and wives gazed and marvelled as they passed through the streets.

Then that bright lord, Prince Vladimir, made a great feast for his new steward. Churilo laid the oaken tables, and as he shook back his golden curls, they fell apart as fair round pearls do that roll asunder; and as young Princess Apraxia was carving the swan, she cut her right hand, and said :

" Marvel not at this, ye gentlewomen, for I gaze upon Churilo's beauty, upon his yellow curls, his golden ring, and my clear eyes are troubled ! Fair my lord, Prince Vladimir, make Churilo thy groom of the chambers. Let him spread the downy feather-bed, place the high cushion, and sit by thy pillow to play upon his gusly of maple-wood, and solace thee."

Then Vladimir told Churilo that thus it must be; for some buy off misfortune, but Churilo

purchased his. So he performed the varied service of groom of the chambers, to the great solace of Prince Vladimir and his Princess, young Apraxia.

When Vladimir made a feast, he sent young Churilo to bid the princes and nobles, and from each guest he commanded him to take ten roubles for himself. And as the goodly youth passed through the streets upon his errand, shaking back his yellow curls like fair round pearls, nuns turned in their cells to gaze upon his beauty, young maids tore off their kokoshniks [1] in admiration.

Then the Princess Apraxia spoke to courteous Prince Vladimir : " Fair lord, this service befitteth Churilo not."

Vladimir perceived that misfortune was come upon him, and spoke this word then to Churilo :

" Dwell thou in a cell, Churilo Plenkovich, or depart now to thine own house, for in my palace I have no longer need of thee."

Then Churilo bowed low in reverence, and went forth from the palace, from Kief town, and came to the Puchai river, where he began again to dwell in mirth and pleasure.

[1] A head-dress, in shape like a coronet.

Ilya and the Boon Companions

FROM the city of Galich to Kief town ran a broad road of forty fathoms: along that road fared a pilgrim, and the road bent beneath his weight. His smock was tattered with use, and a rag was his girdle. His cap weighed forty poods, his foot-gear was of bast, his crutch was nine fathoms, and he leaned upon a hooked staff.

The old man's beard was sprinkled with gray, his head was all white. That aged pilgrim entered Kief town, and craved refreshment after his long journey, desiring to drink green wine in the royal pot-house.

He entered very softly, trod very lightly, said a prayer, crossing himself as enjoined and bowing on all sides as prescribed.

"Hail, ye vintner's men," quoth he. "Pour me a pail and a half of wine, to refresh me, a wandering pilgrim."

But the vintners made answer: "Nay, thou old dog, thou gray hound, we will not trust thee. We will not give thee the green wine without thy money."

But the pilgrim took from his neck an ancient and wondrous cross, six poods and a half in weight, of purest antique gold. "Take this cross as surety," he said; but they dared not.

But the poor boon companions of the pot-house, the peasants and villagers gave each a kopek, and bought therewith a bucket and a half of green wine for the pilgrim. The old man grasped it with one hand, swallowed it in one breath, and said :

" I thank ye, boon companions, and peasants of the village ! Ye have given the old man wine to drunkenness ; but now it is late. Come ye therefore to me to-morrow right early, and I will give you all wine even to drunkenness, in return."

Then the aged man climbed upon the brick oven, and slept. Very early on the morrow, as the warm red sun arose, he descended to the cellars, burst open the doors with his foot, took a cask of forty under one arm, another of the same under the other, and rolled a third before him with his foot, into the green meadow, and so to the market place. Then he shouted with all his heroic might, in a piercing, thunderous voice :

" Ho, ye boon companions and ye peasants of the village ! Come to the old man's feast ! I will give ye all green wine even to drunkenness, without price."

When the vintners heard that, they assembled, eighty men in number, to take the green wine from the aged pilgrim, but could do nothing, and so went to petition Prince Vladimir against him. They had told all their griefs, and Vladimir said :

" I will view this pilgrim, vintners, and I myself will requite you."

All the boon companions and village peasants had drunk their fill, when the old man said :

" Go now to your own homes, to your young wives and little children ; but I will return to the royal pot-house, and sleep upon the oven of bricks."

This he did, and early on the morrow came trusty servants from the Prince, who said :

"Come to Prince Vladimir, thou wandering pilgrim."

But the old man answered: "In vain do ye disquiet me, brothers! Let the old man sleep." Then he descended from the oven, and went through Kief, past the princely palace, and cried in a mighty voice:

"Hey, Prince Vladimir of royal Kief! Receive here thy money for the green wine from the Kazák of the Don, from Ilya of Murom. I go now to the open plain, to the heroic barriers, to the damp oak." And therewith he departed.

Diuk Stepanovich

BEYOND the sea, the blue sea, from glorious Volhynia town, from Galicia the Fair, from Korela the Perverse, from India the Rich, came young Lord Diuk [1] Stepanovich. Like a white gerfalcon fluttering, like a small white ermine coursing, like a small, clear goshawk flying, rode Lord Diuk forth. Like the bright falcon he sat his dapple-bay; his bow-case and his quiver beat his hips, and like a wild beast was his good steed Shaggy beneath him.

The young lord's casque and armour were of pure silver, in value three thousand roubles; his shirt of mail was of fair red gold, in value forty thousand. His good steed was worth five hundred roubles;—for at rivers he required no fords, but leaped a stream of five hundred versts, from shore to shore, at a bound. His stout bow was prized at three thousand; for its stem was of pure silver, the tips of red gold, the cord of white silk of Samarcand. Each burning arrow in his quiver was valued at ten roubles.

Lord Diuk rode a-hunting, beside the broad blue Ocean-sea, and peaceful bays, shooting foxes, martens, blue-gray eagles, geese, white swans and small gray, downy ducks. By day he shot, by

[1] *Dux*—duke. Little Russian, *duka*, a rich man. See Appendix.

night gathered up his arrows. Where his arrows flew, a flame seemed to burn; where they fell and lay, rays streamed as from the bright, clear moon. Three hundred arrows he shot and three: the three hundred he found again, but not the three; and he marvelled thereat.

"I know the value of the three hundred, but of the three which are lost, I know not the value—for they are priceless. They were made of the reed tree, smoothed upon twelve sides and gilded, the shafts set with precious jacinth stones, so that they darted rays like the fair red sun. They were feathered with the plumes of the blue-gray eagle, fast set with sturgeon glue:—not the plumes of the eagle which flieth over the meadows, but of that eagle which hovereth over the blue sea, and reareth his young thereon, and alighteth upon the white Alatyr [1] stone. When he ruffleth his feathers the sea is tossed, the cocks crow in the hamlets; and as he plumeth himself, he droppeth his feathers. Ships came on a day with sailor guests, and gathered up three feathers, the eagle plumes, more precious than satin or cut velvet, and brought them as gifts to kings and princes and Diuk Stepanovich."

Then young Diuk mounted his good steed, and rode towards home. On the broad highway he met one and thirty wandering psalm-singers, and shouted in piercing tones: "Are ye thieves, highwaymen, midnight prowlers or church robbers?"

The psalm-singers made answer: "Young Lord Diuk! we are no robbers; we go as pilgrims from Kief the famous to Volhynia town in broad India."

"Tell me, ye pilgrims, is the way long from Kief to Volhynia; to India the Rich?"

"Great is the way, Lord Diuk, from India to

[1] For some account of this curious stone, see Appendix.

Kief town. A whole year mayest thou journey on foot, and three months must thou ride."

Then said Diuk: "I thank you, pilgrims;" and so rode back to Volhynia.

It was the solemn Easter Even, and young Diuk went to vespers. 'Twas not the silken plume-grass waving, nor the white birch bending low, but the goodly youth, Diuk Stepanovich, bowing there before his mother, the most honourable widow Amalfya Timofeevna.

"Fair my lady mother! Must I live long thus at home, roaming the wide streets and solacing myself with childishness? 'Tis time for me to ride far, far across the open plain, to throw back my heroic shoulders, urge on Shaggy, my dapple-bay, and prove my youthful prowess and daring; to see people and to show myself. Many fair towns have I seen, but never have I been in Kief the glorious, nor beheld Prince Vladimir and his fair Princess Apraxia. Give me thy leave and blessing now, my lady-mother, to journey to Kief town, to view it and them."

Amalfya Timofeevna made answer: "Aï, my dear child! Thou hast never been on the open plain, nor heard the roar of wild beast, the shriek and yell of Tatar; thou hast essayed no heroic quests. Thou wilt not be able to bring back thy head in safety from the plain.—And go not to Kief, my fair child, thou lordly young scion, Diuk Stepanovich! There dwell evil people, who will squeeze thee as though thou wert a fine, juicy apple. I will not give thee my blessing to go to Kief, to courteous Prince Vladimir. Moreover, there stand three great barriers on the straight road. The first is the clashing mountains. Each second time they clash,—each second time they part: thou mayest not pass these, Diuk, and

remain alive. The second barrier is the pecking birds: they will tear thee from thy good steed, Diuk, and them thou mayest not escape. And the third barrier is the Dragon of the Mountain with twelve tails. He will devour thee:—thou canst not escape."

But young Lord Diuk heeded not his mother's words. He went to the stall and curried his good steed with a fine comb of fishes' teeth. Winged Shaggy's mane swept the damp earth, on the left side; his flowing tail wiped out traces of hoofs as he passed over. On him Diuk put his braided bit, his metal-bound Cherkessian saddle, with felt on felt, saddlecloth on saddlecloth beneath; and one of these was striped of red gold, pure silver, and bronze of Kazan, more precious than either of the first. These he made fast with twelve stout girths, and a thirteenth—not for beauty or for youthful vanity, but for heroic strength, that the heroic steed might not leap from under the saddle, and overturn the good youth in the open plain. The girths were all of the silk of Samarcand which teareth not, weareth not; the buckles of fair gold, the tongues thereof of silver, which corrodeth not; the stirrups of damascened steel from beyond the sea, which cannot be destroyed.

When Diuk had caparisoned his heroic steed, and plaited fair jewels in his mane, he went off a little from him and gazed upon him. "Art thou a horse, my good steed, or a wild beast? For under the trappings the good horse cannot be seen."

Then the horse answered him with human voice: "Tear not my sides with thy spurs, Diuk Stepanovich; lash me not with thy silken whip, tighten not my plaited bridle: but cling thou to my sacred mane; bind handfuls of damp mother earth under thy two arms, that thou mayest not fear to ride

with me; for I shall leap from mountain to mountain, lakes and rivers I shall clear at a bound; and so shall I serve thee well."

Then Diuk took off his armour, and put on garments fitting for a journey, took his stout bow and a quiver full of burning arrows on his hip, and touched the earth with his brow in reverence before his mother.

His mother instructed him: "Aï, my dear child! when thou shalt come to famous Kief town and to Prince Vladimir the Fair Sun, and he shall make a banquet and an honourable feast for thee, then boast not of thy orphan possessions, of thy wealth, or of me, thy mother." Therewith she gave him her leave and blessing, and kissed him. And he mounted and rode.

They saw the good youth as he mounted, but saw him not as he rode—'twas but a pillar of dust afar in the plain, a little darkening of the heavens, and he was gone.

And as he rode, he came to the first barrier, the clashing rocks; but his good dapple-bay sprang between, and they crushed him not. And at the second barrier likewise, his good steed leaped past ere the pecking birds of prey could spread their wings; and past the third barrier, the dragon of the mountain, ere he could uncoil his tails, faithful Shaggy bore him.

So the good youth came forth in safety, and rode farther over the open plain until he came to a damp, ringbarked oak, whereon sat a black raven cawing, and spoke this word: "Aï, thou cawing raven, thou bird of omen! I will bend my stout bow, I will lay a fiery arrow to the silken cord, I will scatter thy feathers over the open plain; I will spill thy blood on the damp oak, and give thee over to vain death."

Then spoke the raven with human tongue: "Shed not my hot blood, young Lord Diuk, but ride onward over the open plain, and thou shalt find an adversary, one befitting thy stature."

Diuk rejoiced greatly that he should prove his heroic might, and so rode on, and came upon the traces of a horse. A hero had passed that way, and damp mother earth was furrowed with horse's hoof-marks like to a mighty grating. After that the bold youth came to where the hero had pitched a pavilion of white linen; and beside it stood a white, heroic steed, before whom was spread fine white Turkish wheat.

The bold youth reflected, and began to weep. "Now may I not pursue my way," he said, "and to enter that pavilion the courage faileth me. The hero will kill me in that white pavilion, and my head will fall.—But I will place my good steed beside this steed at the white wheat; if the horses eat the wheat in peace together, then will I enter the tent, and the hero shall not touch me. But if the horses begin to fight, I will go my way, for so I may."

When he beheld the good steeds feed in peace, side by side, he entered the linen pavilion, crossed himself as enjoined, did reverence as prescribed; and behold! in one corner, slumbered a hero and snored until the threshold rang. Then he saw by the heroic inscription that this was the Old Kazák of the Don, Ilya of Murom the Son of Ivan. He essayed to wake the hero, shouting with all his might:

"Rouse thee, Old Kazák, Ilya of Murom! 'Tis time to fare to glorious Kief town, to royal Prince Vladimir, to matins on Easter morn." But the hero slept on, and woke not. At Diuk's third shout, the warrior woke from his deep sleep, and spoke:

"Aï, good youth! tell me thy land and horde, and how thou art called." And Diuk told him all this.

"And why hast thou wakened me from my deep heroic sleep? Wilt thou fight the accursed Tatars in the plain? Or wilt thou come with me thyself, good youth, to the plain, and prove thy youthful might and valour—which of us shall bear away his head, and which joyful news?"

Then Diuk wept and humbled himself before him. "Why should I go to the open plain with thee, Ilya of Murom, thou Old Kazák? For thy death is not decreed in battle. Nay, there is but one sun in heaven, and one moon—and but one Kazák of the Don in Holy Russia, Ilya of Murom, son of Ivan."

This speech pleased Ilya: he sprang to his nimble feet, caught Diuk by his white hands, his golden ring, kissed him on his sugar mouth, and swore brotherhood with him, exchanging crosses. Then they sat down to eat, drink, and make merry. And when they had had their fill, Ilya said: "Go now, young Lord Diuk, to royal Kief town, and if any there shall offend thee, send me word of it, and I will defend thee. But make no boasts."

So Diuk rode forth; and when he was come to Kief, he leaped the walls, passed the three-cornered towers, and came to the royal palace of white stone. In the spacious court he sprang from his good steed, struck the butt of his far-reaching lance into the earth, and flung his good steed's bridle over the point.

The Princess Apraxia was there, looking out. "Lo! the washerwoman," quoth Diuk, and bowed. "And where is courteous Prince Vladimir, the Fair Sun?"

Then was Princess Apraxia very wroth, and the

serving-men made answer : " Royal Vladimir is at the Easter mass."

So Diuk, that good youth, vaulted quickly into his saddle, and rode to the cathedral church. There he dismounted, and left Shaggy, his little dapple-bay, unbound and without orders. In the cathedral, he took his stand in the place of the ambassadors, the left porch. While the mass was sung, he prayed not so much as gazed about : —he gazed at the church and gulped, at Prince Vladimir and shook his head, at the Princess Apraxia and dropped his hand.

When the Easter mass was at an end, Prince Vladimir sent to bid the strange and goodly youth to his honourable feast. " Eh, brothers ! " Diuk made answer to the messengers : " Ye have had spring weather. I have ridden far over swamps and mosses, and my flowered garments are bemired." Nevertheless he followed them, and bowed before Prince Vladimir until his yellow curls swept the damp earth.

As they came from the cathedral, they found a great throng of people gathered about Diuk's Shaggy, marvelling much at the good steed's rich trappings. Diuk followed Prince Vladimir to his princely dwelling, and the good steed came after his master.

Now great rains had fallen on the black earth with which the way was covered, and the road was heavy with mud to the knee. Diuk looked upon his little shoes of green morocco, and then upon Prince Vladimir, and shook his head. But Prince Vladimir heeded not, and began to inquire of him his name and country. This Diuk told him, and how he was come to view royal Kief of which he had heard great marvels, to greet the Fair Sun Vladimir, and to pray to God in his temples.

Then Vladimir took him by his white hands, kissed him on his sweet mouth, and led him to the palace. When Diuk beheld the palace, he shook his head, and said to his good steed: "They will starve thee here, good Shaggy; they will give thee frozen oats to eat; and at home thou wouldst not touch the finest of white wheat."

And when Diuk beheld the banquet hall, with its tables of oak, and cloths patterned with drawn-work, he shook his head yet more.—As they sat about the board, Vladimir inquired of Diuk if it were far from India to Kief town.

"I set out after vespers on Holy Saturday," Diuk made answer, "and lo! I was in Kief at early mass on Easter Day!"

"And are such steeds as thine dear in thy country?"

"We have them for a rouble, and for two roubles, and for six roubles; but my good steed is priceless."

Then spoke up Vladimir's heroes and nobles:

"Nay, lord, that may not be! For by the straight road it is a three-months journey, and by the way about six months, and that when a man hath relays, and springeth from horse to horse, from saddle to saddle, tarrying not."

But Vladimir said nothing.

Then all began to make great brags, some of one thing and some of another; and Diuk alone sat sad and silent, eating not nor drinking nor carving the white swan. And courteous Prince Vladimir spoke:

"Aï, thou bold and goodly youth! is the feast not to thy liking? Or art thou poor, perchance, with nothing whereof thou mayest vaunt thyself?"

"Fair Sun Vladimir, Prince of royal Kief," said Diuk, "I have far greater possessions than thou.

My father left me a little lad and rich, and I am not used to eat black bread." Yet courteous Prince Vladimir was not affronted by his speech.

Then green wine was brought, and liquors, and kalachi [1] of fine wheaten flour. Diuk drank but the half of his wine—the other half he poured under the table. The top crust of the cakes he laid upon the table, the middle he ate, and cast the under crust to the dogs beneath the board.

Seeing this, Vladimir's princes and nobles sprang to their nimble feet, and cried: "What discourteous churl is this? He is not Lord Diuk Stepanovich; never before this day hath he quaffed noble liquors, or tasted wheaten cakes; he knoweth not royal courtesy. He is a herdsman, the fugitive serf of some noble, who hath murdered his master or a merchant, stolen his flowered garments, and driven off his good steed! He is come hither that thou mightest make an honourable feast for him, royal Vladimir, and give him golden treasure, as is thy usage. He mocketh thee, Prince Vladimir; he is not noble, for he looked upon his shoes as he walked; and his mantle of sables he never earned."

"I want not thy treasure," quoth Diuk. "I possess inexhaustible store of golden treasure, and bread and salt in abundance. I heard great marvels of glorious Kief town, and so came hither. But things are not with you as they are with us in India."

"Why didst thou gaze about thee at mass, noble Diuk," said Prince Vladimir then, "in place of praying God?"

"I gazed, royal Vladimir," Diuk made reply, "because thy churches here are not the tenth part of the churches with us. Thy raiment is like the

[1] Wheaten rolls of peculiar shape; very delicious.

raiment of the very poorest among us, and the Princess Apraxia, likewise, is apparelled like our poorer women. Thy churches are of wood with domes of aspen wood: ours are of stone with roofs of purest gold. Our meanest huts exceed thy fairest palace of white stone. Thy streets are foul: ours are cleaned, tawny-yellow sand is strewn upon them, with rugs spread thereon. The steps of thy palace are of black stone, with railings of turned wood fastened with wooden pegs which catch the garments: our steps are of ivory spread with silken rugs, and the railings are carved of pure gold. The floor of thy banquet hall is of pine planks, and uneven, the walls and ceiling are unpainted, the tables of oak, the cloths patterned with drawn threads. But the floors of our halls are of ash, the walls and ceilings all painted, the tables of gold and ivory; our cloths are of silk, and at their corners hang tassels of gold. Over my mother's gate are seventy ikóns,[1] and you have not even ten. From our churches to the palace, pavements of arrow-wood are laid, spread with fine crimson cloth."

"Why dost thou throw away my wine and cakes?" asked courteous Prince Vladimir. And Diuk replied:

"I cannot eat thy wheaten cakes. The upper crust tasteth of pine, and the lower crust of clay. For your ovens here are of brick, your oven-brooms of pine. But my mother's ovens in India the Rich are of glazed tiles, and her oven-brooms are of silk dipped in honey-dew. He who hath eaten one of my lady mother's cakes longeth for another; when he hath eaten that, his soul burneth for a third; and having devoured the third, the fourth will not depart from his mind.—

[1] Pictures of saints.

Thy wines and sweet liquors I cannot drink, for they are musty and ill-flavoured. But in India the Rich, my mother's sweet mead and old liquors are kept in silver casks of forty buckets hooped with gold, and hung by brazen chains in caverns forty fathoms deep. From these vaulted caverns, pipes run to the fresh air of the open plain; and when tempestuous breezes blow, they enter the caverns, and the silver casks rock in their chains, and murmur like swans at play upon the bosom of quiet bays. Our fair liquors never grow musty. Having drunk one cup, the soul burneth evermore for another, and the merit of those liquors no words can equal. The store of my lady mother's flowered garments is never exhausted; for the sewing-women are ever at work,—when one throng quitteth the court, another throng arriveth. My mother's under-garments are of precious stones, the upper of gold brocade; her cap is of fair round pearls, with jewels of great price in the front; and I wear a different dress each day. Our horses are fed only on fine Turkish wheat, and sport upon the plain. And we have twelve deep vaults strewn full of gold and silver and fair pearls. One vault alone would purchase royal Kief, and even Chernigof beside."

Then spake royal Vladimir in displeasure:

"I would that Churilo Plenkovich the Fop were here; for he would know how to answer thee as thou deservest."

Thereupon the oaken doors of the banquet hall were opened wide, and Churilo entered, clad in a fine white blouse without a girdle; he crossed himself, and bowed to all save to Diuk Stepanovich.

Then said Diuk: "The fame of Churilo's beauty was not false,—for his neck is like the driven snow, his face red as the poppy. But the fame of

Churilo's courtesy was false,—he knoweth not how to do homage nor to salute."

Quoth Churilo: "Dost thou boast, thou nobleman's serf, of thy wealth and possessions? Lay a wager, now, with me, a great wager of thirty thousand roubles. For three years we shall go about Kief; each day we shall wear fresh apparel;—each day ride a horse of different colour. And he that hath the fairest shall be adjudged the victor."

"Thou dwellest here in Kief, Churilo Fop," said Diuk; "and thy presses are full to overflowing with raiment, while I have but my travelling garb; and it is well worn."

Nevertheless, Diuk made that great wager, for three years and three days. Then he sat down at the oaken table, in a folding-chair, wrote in haste a scroll to his mother, and went forth with it to the court, where stood his dapple-bay. He laid the scroll in the saddle-bags beneath the rich Cherkessian saddle, and spoke: "Speed home, my Shaggy, to India the Rich; and when thou comest to my lady mother's palace, neigh loudly."

So the good bay flew swiftly to India the Rich. And when the honourable widow Amalfya Timofeevna beheld the empty saddle, she wept sore; for she thought her dear child had laid down his bold head upon the open plain, in Holy Mother Russia. But when the grooms unsaddled good Shaggy, they found the scroll, and gave it to Diuk's lady mother, who rejoiced greatly that her son still lived.

"Alas! the foolish child hath boasted," she said, when she had read the scroll: "yet I must save his honour and his head."

Then she took her golden keys, and packed up changes of raiment for three years and three days,

—three changes for each day,—and bound them on the good steed's back. Over all she put an old and much-worn garment.

"Spring forth, good steed, to thy young lord!" she cried: "and apprise him of thy coming with a neigh."

—Then Churilo Fop and young Lord Diuk began to ride about Kief town with new garments and horses every day. Churilo had great herds of horses driven in from Chernigof; but Diuk anointed his Shaggy each morning with dew, and so changed the colour of his hair. Three years they rode thus through Kief. The last day was Easter, and they went to mass, and stood in the porch on either hand.

The raiment of Churilo Fop was rayed with gold and silver; his clasps were figures of stately youths, his loops in semblance of fair maidens. Beneath the high heels of his slippers of green morocco, nightingales might fly—from their awl-sharp tips curving to the instep, eggs might roll. His black murman[1] cap drooped soft and downy, so that his clear eyes might not be seen in front nor his white neck behind. His mantle was of black sables from over the sea.

But young Lord Diuk went all unadorned through Kief town that day;—save that the points of his foot-gear, woven of the seven silks, and the insteps thereof, were studded thick with precious stones, in value above all that city save only the settings of the Virgin and the Saints.—For over all, concealing utterly his egg-shell raiment, he had put that worn garment sent by his lady mother.

Churilo took his stand upon Vladimir's right,

[1] Norman. There is a game called "the murman cap," for a description of which see Ralston's *Songs of the Russian People.*

and fingered his carven clasps :—when he touched the clasps, the fair maids poured green wine and gave to the comely youths; when he pulled the loops, the good youths plucked their little guslys solacing the maidens fair.

Then spake Prince Vladimir: "In sooth the young Lord Diuk hath forfeited his wager! For such devices, Diuk, thou surely canst not show to us, how fair soever thy garb may be."

"I care not for the thirty thousand of coin," quoth Diuk, "but for my own good fame I have a care. The gold I now bestow upon thy town of Kief." And therewith he cast aside his mean garment, and his apparel beneath gleamed fair, so that all the people fell to the earth in wonder at its beauty. In the front of his cap sat the fair red sun; on its back, the radiant moon; on his crest a flame seemed ever burning.

Then he touched his clasps in semblance of small singing birds—they straightway hopped and twittered. He pulled his loops—dragons and fierce lion-beasts were they, that crawled and leaped, and hissed and roared. Then all the folk were terrified, and fell to the damp earth, and with them Churilo the Fop. Lord Diuk alone stood firm.

"Thou hast won, good youth," spake Vladimir; and besought him: "Spare me at least a remnant of my people. Call back thy beasts and birds."

This Diuk did, and all Kief gave him thanks for having outshone Churilo in foppery. And with the thirty thousand, Churilo's wager, he bought green wine, and gave to all the people freely.

But Churilo Plenkovich was out of measure wroth, and said: "Aï, young Lord Diuk Stepanovich! let us make yet another great wager. Let

us prove now whose horse shall leap the Dnyepr river (for Mother Dnyepr is three versts in breadth), and our turbulent heads shall be the stakes. He whose horse leapeth not over shall yield his turbulent head to be hewn off by the other."

"I have but my poor travelling nag," young Diuk made answer. Yet did he accept the challenge; and going forth to his good steed in the stall, he wept.

"Aï, my Shaggy, my good dapple-bay! Knowest thou not of my great misfortune? If thou leap not fairly over Mother Dnyepr river, they will cut off my tempestuous head:—and the breadth of Mother Dnyepr is three versts. But if thou canst not leap the Dnyepr flood, then will I go seek my cross-brother, Ilya of Murom, the Old Kazák. He will aid us."

Good Shaggy replied in human speech: "Weep not, pathetic master mine! Not over Mother Dnyepr's flood alone will I leap, but yet three versts upon the further shore will I bear thee on my outstretched pinions. If I yield not to my elder brothers, much less will I give way before the younger. For my eldest brother is with Ilya of Murom, my second with Dobrynya Nikitich: I am the third, and Churilo's steed is but the fourth of us."

Then Diuk saddled his good steed with his own hands, and rode far out over the open plain, with Churilo Fop to Mother Dnyepr river. Many mighty heroes, princes, nobles, and of the common folk of Kief not a few, went also to view that contest.

"Do thou leap first," said Churilo Fop.

"Nay," quoth Diuk; "leap thou the first. And when we leap together in India, then will I take the lead."

So Churilo made ready to leap. His good steed reared upon his hind legs on the bank, and essayed the flight, but floundered in mid-stream.

Then Diuk essayed. His good steed bore him in safety past the flood, and turning leaped back whence he came. As he flew, Diuk grasped Churilo by his yellow curls, and dragged him to the shore, and so to Prince Vladimir's presence, where he would have cut off his turbulent head.

But all the old women, young wives, and lovely maids of Kief began to beseech Diuk urgently that he would spare the life of Churilo the handsome Fop; and royal Vladimir spoke also in his behalf.

Then Diuk gave Churilo a mighty kick: "Go, Fop, bewept of women, since Prince Vladimir entreateth; go sit among the women, and dally with the maids. But come thou never more into the company of heroes, weak dangler after women, and beloved of ancient crones!"

But Churilo spoke with malice: "Fair lord, Prince Vladimir, if this child boasteth with reason, let us send talesmen to the splendid Indian land, to take lists of all his cattle and possessions."

"Whom shall we send?" said courteous Prince Vladimir.

"Let Alyosha Popovich go."

"Nay! Alyosha shall not go to my India," quoth Diuk: "for he hath pope's eyes, greedy eyes, and pope's pilfering hands. He will never return."

Then he sat down in a folding-chair at the oaken table, and wrote a billet with haste. And, having fastened it to an arrow, he shot it, bidding it fly forth to Old Kazák Ilya in the open plain, and crave his aid.

Then Ilya sent Dobrynya to inquire what aid Lord Diuk required; and if Dobrynya might not render it, then would he come himself.

"Ho, Dobrynya Nikitich! Thou shalt go to my India," said Diuk then; "but not Alyosha with his greedy pope's eyes and thieving fingers."

So Vladimir appointed Dobrynya and two more to make the lists. If Diuk had the greater possessions, then should Vladimir become his vassal: and contrariwise, if Diuk's brags were not established, then should he serve Vladimir loyally so long as he lived.

"Take paper for three years and for three days," quoth Diuk, "for six scribes may not write the tale of my possessions in twenty years. And of a surety, ye shall do homage to my serving-maids, mistaking them for my lady mother."

Then the talesmen set out, and with them went three great carts of paper. When, after long wanderings, they came to India the Rich, they climbed a lofty mountain, and beheld the land glowing before them. And one said: "Of a surety, Lord Diuk hath sent warning to his native land, that they should set on fire great India the Rich, for lo! it burneth!"

But when they drew near they saw that it was but the golden roofs of the dwellings flaming, and the temples' precious domes which glowed, and the ways strewn with tawny-yellow sand and spread with fair cloth of scarlet. Diuk's palace of white stone had three and thirty towers which flowed together at one point; their domes all were sheathed with green copper, more precious than red gold. About the palace lay a garden of seventy versts, set with all manner of pleasant fruit-trees and of shrubs, walled about with a lofty railing of carven pillars of gold, surmounted by knobs of copper, and the gates were of fair brass. In the court, maids richly apparelled walked with the serving-men, or played at chess.

Within, the palace was reared upon three hundred pillars of silver, four hundred of gold, and others innumerable of precious copper and of iron. In all Kief was nothing like it, and all Kief town would not suffice to purchase that palace alone; and through the town flowed a river of gold.

The talesmen feared to enter; but when at length they did so, and came to the first tower, they found an aged woman of motherly aspect: her garments were of pure silver, with but small admixture of silk, and they bowed to the earth before her.

"Hail, most honourable widow, Amalfya Timofeevna, mother to Lord Diuk Stepanovich!" they said.

"I am not the Lord Diuk's mother," said the woman. "I am his cowherd."

Then the talesmen were sore vexed and shamed, that they should have done reverence to Diuk's cowherd because of her rich array, and inquired no further that day, but went and pitched a tent without the town, and there abode that night.

The next day they came again to the lordly palace, and essayed the second tower. There they found an aged woman of reverend mien, clad in silver and gold; and to her they did homage. But she refused it, saying, "I am the Lord Diuk's washerwoman."

And in like manner, to their exceeding shame and great amaze, they bowed before Diuk's cook, his chamber-women, his baker of cakes, his nurse, and others,—all women of stately mien and venerable aspect, and more richly arrayed than the Princess Apraxia on festal days.

At length the nurse told them that the honourable widow was gone to the long mass, and that they might know her as she came thence by these

signs: Before her would come a host with shovels, and then a host of sweepers, to make all clean, and sprinkle orange-tawny sand, and others still spreading cloth of scarlet. Then would follow the most honourable widow, Amalfya Timofeevna, supported on either hand by scores of maidens.

"Ye must not salute all the women in rich raiment like this of mine, whom you shall meet," spoke the nurse; "for of such there are very many in this town, and ye would never make an end."

So they went forth to meet the honourable lady, and when she came, attended as had been described to them, they were dazzled, and bowed to the earth. The red sun glowed upon her brow, the bright moon and thick-clustering stars gleamed fair behind, and her attire was rich beyond compare.

The lady returned their greeting courteously, and inquired why they were come thither.

"Lord Diuk sent us," they made answer, "to take rate of his cattle and goods."

"That ye cannot do," quoth she; "yet come first and eat bread and salt with me, and feast: then will I show you what ye list."

—At that feast were white swans, and great abundance of all choice viands, green wine and sweet liquors, and cakes of fine wheaten flour, such as Diuk had spoken of in Kief, for which their souls burned. After they had eaten and drunken all they would, the honourable widow showed them first, Diuk's horses; and they would have counted them—but could not. Then she showed them Diuk's foot-gear; this also they would have reckoned—and could not. After that, she led them to the deep vaults with vents to the open plain, where swung the gold-hooped casks of silver in their chains of brass, and murmured like white swans in sweet converse on the bosom of tranquil

bays; and to the treasury of trappings for the horses. Three years they sat and reckoned what might be the value of the Lord Diuk's saddle of state, incrusted with jewels, and of exceeding rich workmanship—and could not so much as begin to compute it.

Then they sent word to Kief, to royal Vladimir: "Sell Kief for paper, and Chernigof for ink, and then, mayhap, we may make a beginning of reckoning Diuk's great possessions."

When courteous Prince Vladimir heard that, he spoke: "I pray thee, Lord Diuk, be my guest in the lofty palace, taste of my bread and salt, and carve the white swan; and trade thou evermore in Kief without tax."

"Nay, Prince Vladimir," young Diuk made answer; "the Fair Sun gave forth no warmth in the morning, and at eventide he will give no heat. No courtesy hast thou used with the youth when he came, and thou shalt have no profit of him now."

A little space thereafter, went Prince Vladimir and Churilo Fop, and all the princes, nobles, and scribes, to Volhynia town in India the Rich, to view and compute Diuk's possessions. When they came to Diuk's dwelling, they marvelled greatly, for such a palace even royal Vladimir himself had never yet beheld,—and they feared to enter.

So young Lord Diuk took the Fair Sun by the hand, and led him in. One half the floor was of crystal; beneath flowed limpid water, and in the water swam fishes of many hues, and sported. When they lashed the water with their tails, the crystal floor resounded. Prince Vladimir held back, fearing to tread thereon, but Diuk led him still forward, for so they must needs go; and at the golden tables they feasted on viands such as they

had never so much as heard of, and drank liquors which they had never seen, no whit worse than Lord Diuk had bragged.

Then Prince Vladimir inquired for his talesmen, and they were led to him; and lo! they were all withered up like shavings, for grief that they could not compute the value of so much as one saddle.

But Vladimir looked on the saddle, and said: "Of a truth, he who wrought that may alone compute its worth."

So Prince Vladimir acknowledged himself vassal to Lord Diuk, as they had agreed; but Diuk said:

"I need thy service not. Go home, and look to it that henceforth the unknown man and stranger suffer no offence in thy house."

Vasily the Drunkard and Tzar Batyg

FROM beneath the cross Levanidof,[1] from beneath the birch so white, issued forth two aurochs, and three aurochs, and roamed past Kief town.

By Kief they beheld a wondrous marvel, a marvellous wonder: a damsel came forth, weeping bitterly, and bearing in her hands the book of the Holy Gospel. And as she read, she wept in twofold measure.

Then the aurochs went to their mother: "Hail, mother aurochs!" said they; "we have been to Kief town, and beheld a marvel:" and they told her of the damsel.

"Foolish aurochs are ye, little children!" quoth mother aurochs. "That was no damsel weeping sore, but the city wall lamenting, for she hath foreseen ill fortune for Kief. Tzar Batyg[2] is come with his son, his son-in-law, and with his learned scribe. His son's host numbereth forty thousand; the host of his son-in-law, forty thousand; and the learned scribe's no less."

—Batyg marched to Kief town, pitched his white pavilions, and demanded of Prince Vladimir an adversary in single combat.

Now, it chanced by evil fortune, that the best of the heroes were not in Kief town. Ilya had been

[1] Or Levantinof, in one version: the cross of the East.
[2] See Appendix.

despatched to the Latinsky land to buy heroic steeds, Dobrynya to the Cherkessian country for saddles, and Alyosha to the Sorochinsky land for wheat.

But there dwelt in Kief in those days a hero and good youth, Vasily Ignatievich by name, who abode in the imperial pot-house. He had squandered in drink his wife's dowry and all his possessions.

"Ho there, ye princes and nobles!" quoth Prince Vladimir; "summon Vasily Ignatievich hither to me."

Then the nobles went to the royal pot-house, and sought out Vasily, and addressed to him these words:

"Ho there, little Vasily the Drunkard! Why dost thou lie there naked on the oven, without a thread? Nothing knowest thou, nor carest. Tzar Batyg hath come upon us, and is now before Kief. The dog hath written to our Prince, and maketh boast: 'I will burn and rase Kief town, I will dissolve God's churches in smoke, I will take captive the Prince and his Princess.' And us, the princes and nobles, he will seethe in a kettle."

Then Vasily slipped down from the oven, barred up the pot-house, making all very fast, tore from the princes and nobles all their fair apparel, wrenched out a door-post, and belaboured the men upon their naked ribs, pursuing them even to the royal court.

When Vladimir looked on them he smiled, and said: "Ho, my princes and nobles; have ye drunk or gamed?"

"Little father! Prince Vladimir," they made answer, "we have neither drunk nor gamed, but Vasily the Drunkard hath done us this dishonour."

"Ah, ye stupid nobles and senseless!" quoth

Vladimir, "ye have not appeased the youth, but irritated him."

Then Vladimir went himself to the royal pot-house, prayed before the Wonder-working holy picture, saluted on all four sides, with a special reverence to Vasily, and spoke to him in the words of the princes and nobles.

"Fetch me a little cup of drunkenness, little father, Prince Vladimir!" quoth Vasily, "the cup from which drinketh Ilya of Murom."

—Now Ilya's cup held six buckets and a half; but he drained it dry.

"Fetch yet another cup for health, little father; the one from which drinketh Dobrynya Nikitich."

And that cup, of four buckets and a half, Vasily drained also; and yet a third, the cup of Alyosha, of two buckets and a half.

Then Vasily said: "Now I may sit my horse, and wield my sword of ninety poods."

Thereupon he went forth upon the city wall, and from the angle tower thereon he shot an arrow which slew three of Batyg's best heads—his son, his son-in-law, and his cunning scribe.

Tzar Batyg had fleet horses and good, and he sent swift messengers to Kief town, demanding that the offender be delivered up to him forthwith. But Kief town is not small; a falcon may not fly about it in a summer's day, nor a little bird soar across—and the guilty man could not be found.

Vasily mounted his good steed, and clad in warlike array, with his Tatar spear, his sword of ninety poods, his stout bow, and gilded arrows, sallied forth before the face of Batyg.

"Hail, Tzar Batyg!" he said. "Wilt thou receive me as thy comrade? We will take Kief together, we will burn and destroy it, and God's temples we will turn to dust."

Tzar Batyg was beguiled with his speech; and when Vasily asked for forty thousand men to take Kief, he gave them gladly. Then Vasily rode forth into the open plain with this host, made a turn to the right, unsheathed his sword of ninety poods, and cut down and slew them to the last man.

Then he returned again to the face of Batyg.

"Forgive this my first fault," he said; "I have lost that host of forty thousand. But I have spied out Kief town and viewed it, where the gates are open and unbarred."

So Tzar Batyg gave him another band of forty thousand, and forty forties of black sables, besides gold and silver without measure.

Again Vasily rode to the open plain; and having cut down and slain his host, he returned to Batyg craving pardon and yet another troop.

Tzar Batyg gave them, and rich presents likewise; but when Vasily had slain these men also, Batyg took a spyglass and viewed the glorious open plain, and beheld the evil deed.

Then he assembled his good steeds, and returned to his own country, and swore an oath never more to lay siege to Kief town, for in Kief was no lack of heroes.

And from that day forth they began to sing the Song of Vasily, which shall be sung for evermore.

Ilya and Idol

MIGHTY Ivaniusho arrayed himself and set out for Jerusalem, to pray to the Lord, to bathe in Jordan, to kiss the cypress tree, and to visit the grave of the Lord.

Mighty Ivaniusho's foot-gear was of the seven silks, his hooked staff weighed forty poods; into his foot-gear precious stones were woven. On summer days his course was lighted by the fair red sun; in winter, by a precious jewel.

As he returned from Jerusalem he passed Tzargrad, and found that the accursed Idol was come thither, that the holy ikóns had been shattered and trodden in the mire, and horses were fed in the temple of God. Then mighty Ivaniusho caught a Tatar by the breast, dragged him forth into the open plain, and began to inquire of him:

"Tell me now, thou faithless Tatar! Conceal nothing: what manner of man is yon accursed Idol? Is he great of stature?"

Said the Tatar: "Our Idol is three fathoms, well measured, in height, and three in breadth; his head is like a beer-kettle, his eyes like drinking-cups. His nose is an ell long from its root, and he cheweth the cud like an aurochs."

Ivaniusho caught the accursed Tatar by the hand, and hurled him upon the open plain; and the bones of the Tatar flew asunder. Then Ivani-

usho pursued his journey, and met Ilya of Murom in the way.

"Hail, Ilya of Murom, thou Old Kazák!" said Ivaniusho; and they greeted each other there.

"Whence wanderest thou, mighty Ivaniusho?" inquired Ilya. "Whither lieth thy road?"

Then Ivaniusho told him how he had been to Jerusalem, and had passed Tzargrad; and Ilya began to inquire of him:

"Is all in Tzargrad as of old? Is all as it was wont to be?"

"Nay," said Ivaniusho; and he told Ilya of the conquest, and how God's temples were defiled.

"A fool thou art, stout and mighty Ivaniusho!" cried the Old Kazák. "Thy strength is as twice my strength, but thy boldness and daring are not as the half of mine. For thy first speech I could have pitied thee, but for this last I could have chastised thee upon thy naked body! Why hast thou not delivered Tzar Constantine?[1] But now, undo quickly thy foot-gear of the seven silks from thy feet, and put on my morocco shoes, for I will go sadly as a wandering psalm-singer."—And it grieved him to give his good horse to the pilgrim.—"Ride softly as water floweth," he said; "remain in some place of easy access, and wait for me, for I shall soon return. And give hither thy staff of forty poods."

Then Ilya strode on quickly, and each stride was a verst and a half in length:—and when he came to Tzargrad, he shouted with full might:

[1] In some variants, Idolishe (the Idol or Idolater) attacks Prince Vladimir, and the scene is laid in Kief. This version has been chosen as an interesting instance of the adaptation of a *bylina* to different localities. He came to Kief, the minstrel explained, as a punishment for the Princess Apraxia's sin against Kasyan Mikailovich.

"Ho there, Tzar Constantine! Give gold, give saving alms to a wandering psalm-singer."

Tzar Constantine rejoiced, and at the singer's shout, the forty towers rocked, the liquor on the tables splashed over, damp mother earth quivered, and the palace of white stone heaved from corner to corner. At the third shout the accursed Idol was greatly terrified, and spoke to Tzar Constantine.

"Your Russian psalm-singers are loud-voiced fellows," quoth Idol. "Receive this pilgrim, feed him, give him drink and gold at thy pleasure."

Constantine went forth upon the railed balcony, and bade the pilgrim enter. And when the pilgrim had eaten and drunk, the Idol took him to himself to question:

"Tell me truly, thou Russian pilgrim, and conceal nothing. What manner of heroes have ye in Russia? And your Old Kazák, Ilya of Murom, —is he great of stature? Can he devour much bread, drink much green wine?"

And that Russian pilgrim made answer: "Yea, thou accursed Idol. We have Ilya of Murom in Kief, and his stature differeth not from mine by so much as a hair's breadth. We have been brothers in arms. His beard is gray but handsome. Of bread he eateth three consecrated loaves, and his drink is two cups of green wine."

"A fine hero, in sooth, for Kief!" quoth Idol. "If I had but that hero in this place, I would set him on the palm of one hand, and with the other I would press him until he became a pancake. And I would blow him away into the open plain! For lo! I am Idol, three fathoms in height, and my breadth is three fathoms well told. I can put a loaf in one cheek, and the same in the other, and a white swan is but a mouthful for me. I eat seven poods of bread and three oxen at a meal,

with wine in due proportion,—a cask of forty buckets."

"The pope of Rostof had a greedy cow," said Ilya. "She ate and ate, and drank until she burst."

This speech pleased not Idol the Accursed. He seized his poniard from the oaken table, and hurled it at Ilya of Murom, that wandering psalm-singer. But Ilya was nimble of foot, and leaped quickly aside upon the oven, and turning, caught the weapon in its flight, upon his staff. The poniard glanced off, struck the white oak door; the door flew from its fastenings; the poniard bounded into the ante-room, slew twelve Tatars, and wounded yet another twelve. Ilya snatched his little cap of nine poods from his head, and flung it at Idol the Accursed, and Idol flew through the wall into the open plain. Then Ilya sprang into the great courtyard, waved his staff, slew all the accursed Tatars, cleared the city of Tzargrad, and delivered Tzar Constantine.

Dobrynya and the Dragon

YOUNG Dobrynya took his stout, death-dealing bow, his fiery little arrows, and went a-hunting, and came to the Blue Sea.

At the first bay he found no geese, swans, nor small gray ducks; neither did he find them at the second bay, nor at the third. Then Dobrynya's restive heart grew hot within him; he turned about quickly and went to his home, to his mother, sat down upon the square hewn bench, and dropped his eyes upon the oaken floor. Therewith came his mother to him, and said:

"Aï, young Dobrynushka Nikitich! Thou art returned in no merry mood."

"Aï, my mother!" quoth Dobrynya; "give me thy leave and blessing to go to the Puchai river."

"Young Dobrynya," his mother made answer, "I will give neither leave nor blessing. None who hath gone to the Puchai stream hath ever returned thence."

"Aï, little mother," said Dobrynya, "if thou give thy leave I will go; and if thou give it not,—I will go."

So his mother consented. He threw off his flowered raiment, and put on garments meet for a journey, and on his head a wide-brimmed hat from the Grecian land. Then he saddled and bridled a good steed which no man had ever ridden, took

his stout bow, his fiery arrows, his sharp sword and far-reaching spear, and his battle-mace.

And as he rode forth, accompanied by his little page, his mother laid her commands upon him.

"If thou wilt go to the Puchai river, young Dobrynya, immeasurable heats shall overcome thee: yet bathe thou not in Mother Puchai flood; for she is fierce and angry. From her first stream fire flasheth; from her second, sparks shower; from her third, smoke poureth in a pillar."

—They saw the good youth mounting, they saw him not as he rode,—there seemed but a wreath of mist far out on the open plain.

When he was come to Mother Puchai river, intolerable heat overpowered him, and he heeded not his mother's behest. He took from his head his cap from the Grecian land, put off his travelling garb, his shirt, his foot-gear of the seven silks, and began to bathe in the Puchai.

"My mother said this was a wild and angry stream," quoth he; "but 'tis gentle—peaceful as a pool of rain-water." He dived like a duck beneath the first stream, and through the second likewise.—And lo! there was no wind, but the clouds sailed on; there were no clouds, yet the rain dropped down; no rain was there, yet the lightning flashed; no lightning, yet sparks showered fast. No thick darkness was it that obscured the sky, nor gloomy clouds descending, but a fierce Dragon flying down upon Dobrynya, the savage Dragon of the Cavern, with her twelve tails.

"Aha! young Dobrynya Nikitich!" quoth the Dragon. "Now will I devour Dobrynushka whole! I will take dear little Dobrynya in my tail, and bear him into captivity."

"Ho, thou accursed Dragon!" said Dobrynya. "When thou shalt have captured Dobrynya, then

will be the fitting time to boast; but thou hast not yet Dobrynya in thy claws!" Then he dived swiftly beneath the first stream, and out through the second. But his young page had been overhasty, and had driven away Dobrynya's good steed; he had carried off the stout bow, the sharp sword, far-reaching spear, and war-mace. The cap alone was left, the wide-brimmed cap from the Grecian land.

Dobrynya seized his cap, filled it with sand from the river-bank, and with it smote the cursed worm, and hewed off three of her tails—the best of all.

Then the Dragon of the Cavern besought Dobrynya:

"Aï, thou young Dobrynya Nikitich! Give me not over to fruitless death, shed not my innocent blood! I will not fly in Holy Russia, I will imprison no more heroes, nor strangle young maidens, nor orphan little children. I will be to thee a submissive Dragon; and thou, Dobrynya, shalt be my elder brother, and I will be thy younger sister."

Dobrynya was taken with her wiles, and loosed her at will, and returned to his home, to his mother, to the banquet hall, where he sat himself down upon the four-square bench.

But the wily Dragon raised herself upon her wings over royal Kief town, caught up Beauty, niece to Prince Vladimir, and bore her off to a cavern in the hills.

At that time Royal Vladimir made an honourable feast for many princes, nobles, bold warrior-maidens, mighty heroes, and wandering good youths. And Dobrynya prayed his mother's leave and blessing to go to that honourable feast.

"Nay," she made answer: "abide thou in thine own dwelling, Dobrynya, with thy mother; drink green wine until thou art full drunken, and lavish

golden treasure at thy will. But go not to this feast." But when her son would have gone in any case, she gave both leave and blessing, and Dobrynya arrayed himself as was meet.

On his little feet he put shoes of green morocco, with lofty heels and pointed toes. About their sharp peaks an egg might roll, under the heels might sparrows fly. His garments were of flowered stuffs, his mantle of black sables from beyond the sea.

He saddled his good steed, and rode forth to the spacious court. When he was come thither he bound his steed in the centre, to the ring of gold in the carven pillar, and entered the banquet hall. There he crossed his eyes as it is written, he did reverence as prescribed, to two, to three, to four sides, and to the Prince and Princess in particular. Then they led him to the great place of honour at the oaken board, with its savoury viands and honeyed drinks, and poured him a cup of green wine, a second of beer, a third of sweet mead :— the measure of that cup was a bucket and a half, and the weight thereof, a pood and a half. This Dobrynya took in one hand, and drained at one draught.

Royal Vladimir, as he paced the banquet hall, stroking his curls, looked on the heroes, and spoke this word : " Aï, ye stout and mighty heroes ! I will lay upon you a great service. Ye must go to the Tugy mountains, to the fierce Dragon that hath carried off our royal niece, Beauty the Fair."

Then the great hid behind the lesser, and they, in turn, behind the small, and from the least in rank, no answer came. From the middle table spoke Semyon, lord of Karamychetzka : " Little father ! Vladimir of royal Kief ! But yesterday in the open plain, I beheld Dobrynya beside the Puchai river in conflict with that Dragon. And

the Dragon beguiled him,—calling him her elder brother, herself his younger sister. Send Dobrynya, therefore, to the Tugy mountains, for the Princess Beauty."

So Vladimir laid his commands on Dobrynya, and Dobrynya mourned and was sad. He sprang to his nimble feet, in his place within the granite palace, and stamped upon the oaken floor. The tables rocked, the liquor quivered in the glasses, and the heroes were thrown from their seats with the shock. Dobrynya rushed forth into the courtyard, loosed his good steed from the golden ring, mounted and rode to his own dwelling. When he had spread fine Turkish wheat before the horse, in the midst of his own courtyard, he entered his mother's dwelling, sat on the wall-bench, and hung his turbulent head.

"Why art thou sad, Dobrynya?" his mother inquired of him. "Was thy seat at meat not to thy liking, or unbefitting thy rank? Did the cup pass thee by? Did some drunken boor spit in thine eye, or did the fair damsels scoff at thee?"

"Mine was the place of honour at meat," Dobrynya answered, "the greatest place, not the least; no fool offended, no damsel scoffed. But Prince Vladimir hath laid upon me a great service. I must go to the Tugy mountains, and free his niece from the fierce Dragon of the Cave."

"Grieve not, Dobrynya," spoke his mother, the honourable widow, Afimya Alexandrevna. "Lie down to sleep early this evening; to-morrow will be wise, for the morning is wiser than the evening." Her son heeded her; and the next morning, rising early, he washed himself very white, and arrayed himself for the journey.

"Be not sad," spoke his mother: "thy father went to the glorious Tugy mountains and slew an

accursed serpent, and now thou must needs go thither likewise. Take not thy swift, stout bow, nor thy war-club, thy far-reaching spear, nor yet thy sharp sword. I will give thee a little whip of the seven silks, which thou must brandish; and I will give thee a magic kerchief. Thy right hand will droop, the light will fade from thine eyes, and the Dragon will begin to drag thee away, and to hurl thee down, and the little dragons to bite thy horse's fetlocks as he trampleth on them. But take thy magic kerchief, lift it to thy white face and wipe thy clear eyes, and thou shalt be stronger than before.—Then draw this whip, braided of the seven silks, from thy pocket, and beat thy good steed between the ears and on his hind legs. With that thy brown will begin to prance, and will shake off the Dragon's brood from his feet, and crush them to the last one. And brandish this silken whip; so shalt thou bend the Dragon to earth and subdue it like a Christian beast; and thou shalt sever its twelve tails, and give it over to speedy death."

So Dobrynya mounted his good steed, and rode to the Tugy mountains and the Dragon's cavern. Twelve days he rode, and ate nothing but a wheaten roll. On the thirteenth day he came to the glorious hills, but the Dragon was not in her cave, and the Prince's royal niece he could not see. Then he began to trample on the little dragons, and they coiled about his horse's fetlocks so that the good brown could no longer leap. He drew from his pocket the little whip of the silks of Samarcand, and beat the good steed between the ears and on his hind legs; the good brown began to prance thereat, shook off all the dragon brood, and crushed them to the very last.

Dobrynya gazed out over the open plain, and

lo ! the accursed serpent came flying towards him. When she espied him, she let fall from her claws upon the damp earth, the soft, thick grass, the dead body of a hero, and flew straight at Dobrynya.

" Aï, little Dobrynya Nikitich ! Why hast thou broken thine oath, and crushed all my little dragons ? "

" And aï, thou accursed Dragon ! " quoth Dobrynya, " what devils bore thee over Kief, that thou shouldest seize young Beauty Putyatichna ? Yield her now without battle or bloodshed."

" Without battle and bloodshed I will not yield the Prince's niece."

So they waged mighty battle all that day until the evening ; and the snake began greatly to prevail. Yet Dobrynya, recalling his mother's counsel, wiped his clear eyes and his white face upon the kerchief, and his strength was greater than before. The next day they contended until the evening, and again the third day, so that Dobrynya would have fled before the serpent. But a voice from heaven warned him that if he would fight yet three hours longer, he should overcome the beast.

He fought on, but might not endure the Dragon's blood, so great was the flood thereof. Then he would have left the Dragon, but the voice spoke yet again from heaven : " Tarry yet three hours by the serpent, Dobrynya. Take thy far-reaching spear, smite upon the damp earth, and conjure thy spear : ' Yawn, damp mother earth, in all four quarters, yawn ! Suck up the Dragon's blood ! ' "

When he had done this, and had fought the three hours, he overcame the beast. Recalling his mother's behest, he drew forth his whip of the silks of Samarcand, hewed off the twelve tails, cut the sinuous body into small pieces, and strewed them over the open plain.

After that, he entered the Dragon's deep den, and released the Russian prisoners,—Tzars, Kings and Princes by forties, and of lesser folk many thousands,—and bade them go where they would. But young Beauty, the Princess, he could not find, until he came to the farthest den. There she lay chained with hands outstretched. He released her straight, and led her forth to the white world. Then he mounted his good steed, and setting Beauty upon his right hip, rode out over the plain.

Said Beauty: "For thy great service I would fain now call thee little father, but that I may not do; for thy great deed, I would call thee my own brother, yet now I may not; gladly would I call thee friend and lover, but that thou lovest me not, Dobrynushka."

To her Dobrynya made answer: "Aï, Beauty Putyatichna! Thou art of princely birth, and I am but of peasant stock:[1] it is not possible for thee to call me friend and lover."

As they thus rode over the plain, they came upon the traces of a horse, great clods of earth cast up, so that one might sink in the hollows, even to the knee. Dobrynya followed and found Alyosha Popovich in the way.

"Ho there, Alyosha Popovich!" cried he; "take the Princess Beauty, and bear her in honour to Vladimir, our Fair Sun Prince in royal Kief, and thy head shall answer to me for her." And this Alyosha performed.

When he had thus sent away Beauty, Dobrynya followed again after the tracks, and came upon a hero in the open plain, riding, in woman's garb, upon a fair and goodly horse.

"Eh!" quoth Dobrynya; "this is no hero, but

[1] This agrees with Vladimir's uncle, Dobrynya, in history.

a bold damsel-errant, some maid or wife, forsooth!" Therewith he rode after the warrior-maiden, and smote her upon her turbulent head with his mace of damascened steel. But the warlike virgin sat her good steed firmly, wavering not nor glancing back. Dobrynya sat his good steed in terror, and departed from that bold polyanitza: "Plainly," quoth he, "Dobrynya's valour is as of yore, but his strength is not the strength of other days."

Now there stood, near by in the plain, a damp oak, six fathoms in girth. This Dobrynya smote with his mace, and shivered into atoms; and he marvelled greatly.

"Of a truth," he said, "Dobrynya's might is as of old, but his courage is not the courage of earlier days!"

Then he again rode in pursuit of the bold warrior-maid, and smote her honourably upon her tempestuous head.—She wavered not, glanced not behind. But Dobrynya was sore amazed, and tested his might upon a damp oak of twelve fathoms,—and shivered it in splinters. Thereupon, Dobrynya waxed wroth, as he sat his good steed, and rode after the bold virgin-warrior a third time, and smote her with his mace.

Thereat she turned and spoke: "Methought the Russian gnats were biting, but lo! 'tis the Russian hero tapping!"

Then she seized Dobrynya by his yellow curls, twisted him from his good horse, and dropped him into her deep leather pouch, and rode her way over the open plain.

At length her good steed spoke: "Aï, thou young Nastasya, Mikula's[1] daughter, thou bold

[1] Mikula the Villager's Son; and father to Stavr's wife, according to one singer.

warrior-maid! Two heroes I cannot carry. In might that knight is thine equal, and the courage of that knight is as twice thine."

Quoth young Nastasya Mikulichna: "If the hero be very aged, I will cut off his head; if he be young and well pleasing in my sight, I will call him friend and lover; if he please me not, I will set him on one of my palms, and press him with the other, and make a pancake of him."

Then she drew him forth from the leather pouch, and liked him well. "Hail, dearest Dobrynya Nikitich!" quoth she.

"How knowest thou me, bold virgin knight? for thee I know not."

"I have been in Kief town, and have seen thee, Dobrynushka; but thou couldst by no means know me. I am daughter to the Polish King, young Nastasya Mikulichna, and I roam the open plain, seeking an adversary. If thou wilt take me for thy wife, Dobrynya, I will grant thee thy life. And thou must take a great oath; if thou swear it not, I will make of thee an oat-cake."

"Leave me but my life, young Nastasya, and I will take that great oath, and I will take also the golden crown with thee."

So they took the oath, and set out for Kief town, to courteous Prince Vladimir. Dobrynya's mother came to meet them, inquiring: "Whom hast thou there, Dobrynya Nikitich?"

"Ah, Afimya Alexandrevna, thou honourable widow my mother! I bring my enemy, young Nastasya Mikulichna; I am to take the golden crown with her."

Then they went to Prince Vladimir, and entered his banquet hall, where Dobrynya did reverence to all, and in especial, to the Prince and Princess.

"Hail, Fair Sun Vladimir of royal Kief!"

"Hail, Dobrynya Nikitich! Whom hast thou there?"

Thereupon Dobrynya told him all; Nastasya was received into the Christian faith, and they took the golden crowns. Courteous Vladimir made them a great feast for three days; and thereafter they lived happily for a space.

Ivan the Merchant's Son and his Horse

IN royal Kief town, glorious Prince Vladimir held a mighty feast, for his princely nobles, stout Russian heroes, and rich merchants. The day was half spent, the feast half over, and all were making brags. Prince Vladimir waxed merry, and paced the banquet hall.

"Ho, all ye princely nobles, and Russian heroes all," he cried at length: "I too can boast. I have three hundred stallions, and three of exceeding merit: one is an iron-gray, the second's mane hangeth all to one side, the third is coal-black. Him Ilya of Murom captured from the Dragon's Son, Tugarin. He can gallop from Kief to Chernigof, between mass and matins, and the distance is three hundred versts and thereto thirty versts and three. Is there in all Kief town a man whose horse can do the like?" All hid, and made no answer. Then Ivan Merchant's Son stepped forth, and cried in piercing tones:

"Lord, courteous Prince Vladimir, such a horse have I. And I will lay a great wager;—not a hundred roubles, nor yet a thousand,—but my turbulent head shall be the stake,—that he will run against thy horse from Kief to Chernigof, between mass and matins, as thou hast said."

"What devil wilt thou ride, then, Ivan?" quoth Vladimir.

With that all the princely nobles and ship-merchants staked a hundred thousand roubles for the Prince; but none laid any stake for Ivan, save only the ruler of Chernigof.

Then with speed did they write out the strong contracts, and set their white hands thereto, that they might be binding and effectual.

And, when Ivan Merchant's Son had quaffed a cup of green wine, of a bucket and a half, he saluted all and went forth.

When he came to the stall of white oak where stood his shaggy brown steed of three years, he fell down before the horse's left hoof, and wept in floods. "Help me, good my steed," quoth he; and told him of the great wager.

Thereto his shaggy brown made answer in human Russian tongue: "Hey, courteous master mine! Thou hast no cause to grieve. I fear not that iron-gray. If I run for thy wager, I shall outstrip him. But do thou water me for three dawns with mead, and feed me with Sorochinsky wheat. And when the three days are past, a stern messenger shall come to thee from the Prince, bidding thee ride against him. Then saddle me not, Ivan, but take me by my silken bridle, and lead me to the royal court. Don thy mantle of sables,—thy mantle of three thousand roubles, with its embossed clasps of five hundred roubles. When thou leadest me to the court, I shall rear up and paw thy mantle, and nip the black sables, and prance in all directions. Then shall the Prince and his nobles marvel. But care thou not, for it shall go well with thee. I will redeem thy turbulent head, and put courteous Prince Vladimir and my elder brother to shame."

All came to pass as the shaggy brown had foretold. When he began to pluck at Ivan's mantle, and to trample on the black sables, all the princely nobles and rich merchants assembled in the spacious royal courtyard stood and marvelled.

"Foolish art thou, Ivan Merchant's Son!" they cried. "Thy good steed will spoil thy mantle. Prince Vladimir gave it thee, and he will pardon a great wrong rather than this."

But sweet Ivan made answer: "The foolish are ye. For if I live I shall win another mantle, and if I die I shall have enjoyed this."

Then, as the shaggy brown danced about the court, he began to roar like an aurochs, and to hiss like a dragon. The three hundred stallions were affrighted, and fled the royal court; the iron-gray broke two legs, the long-maned steed his neck; the captive black fled, neighing, with tail uplifted, to the Golden Horde, leaping the Dnyepr stream in his flight.

All who saw it were terrified, and Ivan cried: "Is it not time, Prince Vladimir, for us to set out for Chernigof town?"

Prince Vladimir called to his stable-men to collect the three hundred stallions, and pick out the choicest, the three. But the men made complaint that all the three hundred lay dead, by reason of that terrible cry of Ivan's steed, and there was none left whereon the prince might ride.

Then said sweet Ivan Merchant's Son:

"Delay not, Prince Vladimir, but count out to me that great wager of a hundred thousand roubles."

This Vladimir did with sorrow, and said: "Yield me thy steed, Sweet Ivan Merchant's Son; for I have none whereon to ride."

Quoth sweet Ivan: "My steed was bought in the Great Horde, from under his mother, for five

hundred roubles, and before he came to me he cost a thousand. Shall I give such a steed to Prince Vladimir?"

Nevertheless, he yielded him; and Vladimir commanded that the horse should be led to the stable, and fed with fine wheat, and watered with sweet mead.

But the stable-men came running in dire haste, making great complaint, that the steed would neither eat nor drink, but hissed and shrieked like a dragon, and struck dead all the horses.

Then was Prince Vladimir very wroth: he wrapped himself in his mantle of sable, and spoke this word: "Ho there, thou Ivan Merchant's Son! Lead that horse from my court forthwith. The devil take thee and thy steed!"

Thus was the great race ridden.

Ilya of Murom and Falcon the Hunter

ON the road to Kief town of courteous Prince Vladimir, stood a great barrier and strong—a force of seven mighty heroes, bold warriors all, and lesser knights.

The first was Ilya of Murom, our Old Kazák of the Don; the second Dobrynya Nikitich, the third Alyosha Popovich, the fourth Churilo Plenkovich, the fifth Mikailo the Rover, the sixth and seventh the Agrikanof brothers. They pitched their pavilions, and slept until the white dawn.

The barrier was strong: no horseman galloped past nor wayfarer journeyed by, no wild beast crouched, no bird soared overhead; and if, by chance, a bird flew by, it dropped its feathers there.

There, late at even, passed young Falcon the Hunter.[1] He asked no leave at the barrier, but leaped across, and roamed the open plain.

The next morning, right early, at dawn of day, our Kazák of the Don went out to the white court to refresh himself, and espied the traces of a horse's hoofs, the marks of a heroic ride and a black steed.

Then Ilya entered again the white pavilion, and spoke these words: "Comrades, brothers, ye heroes stout and mighty! What sort of a barrier is this of yours—what manner of stern fortress? But now I beheld the traces of a horse's gallop, of a

[1] See Appendix: *Ilya of Murom.*

heroic ride. Arm ye then, friends, for a foray into the open plain to seek the rash intruder." Then he began to hold a great council:

"It will not do, children, to send Vaska Longskirt, for he will get entangled in his skirts in the encounter; nor Grishka the Noble, for men of noble descent are boastful, and he will vaunt himself in the combat. Nor may Alyosha go against the unbidden visitor, for Alyosha is of popish descent, and popes' eyes are covetous, popes' hands pilferous; Alyosha will see the braggart's great store of gold and silver, and will covet them. Dobrynya Nikitich must go: if the knight be Russian, then shall Dobrynya swear brotherhood with him, but if he be an infidel knight, he shall challenge him to single combat."

Dobrynya sprang to his nimble feet, saddled and mounted his good steed, and rode forth to Father Sakatar river, by the blue sea. As he looked along the straight road, he beheld a knight riding before him, with youthful valour. The horse under the hero was like a wild beast; at each leap he compassed a verst, and the tracks he left were as large as a ram or a full-grown sheep. From that good steed's mouth flames flashed, from his nostrils sparks showered abroad, from his ears smoke curled in rings.

The helmet on the hero's head glowed like fire, and his horse's bridle darted rays; stars sprinkled from his stirrups, on his saddle stood the dawn, the morning dawn. At his left stirrup sprang a greyhound, and a dragon of the hills was also chained thereto. On his right stirrup perched a blue-gray eaglet, who sang and whistled without ceasing, caressing and diverting the hero. From shoulder to shoulder hopped a falcon clear, plucking his long locks from ear to ear.

The knight sat his good steed well, and diverted himself in noble wise, hurling his steel mace to the clouds, and catching it as it fell, in his white hands, without permitting it to touch the damp earth. As he thus played, he conjured his mace : " Lightly as I now whirl this mace aloft, even so lightly will I twirl Ilya of Murom."

Then Dobrynya shouted : " Ho, thou Falcon the Hunter ! Turnest thou not back before our barrier ? "

Cried Falcon, " 'Tis not for thee to pursue me in the open plain ! high time is it that thou wert in the village herding the swine."

At that heroic cry, the peaceful bays were troubled, the waters grew choked with sand. Dobrynya's charger sank to his knees, and Dobrynya fell to the damp earth, where he lay as in a heavy sleep for the space of about three hours. When he awoke from that swoon, he mounted his good steed, and, returning to the barrier, told Ilya of Murom all.

Said the old man : " There is none to take my place, the place of this turbulent old head."

Then saddled he his good charger Cloudfall, both quickly and stoutly, and sprang upon his back without touching the stirrups. On his saddle-strap hung his war-club, and its weight was ninety poods. On his hip rested his sharp sword, in his hand he held his silken whip. Thus armed he rode in pursuit of the knight to the Sorochinsky mountains, and looking through the circle of his young fist, he descried a black spot in the plain, and rode towards it.

" Thief ! dog ! braggart ! " he shouted in piercing tones. " Why hast thou passed our barrier, doing no reverence to me, asking no leave ?" When the braggart hunter heard that, he turned and rode at Ilya; and Ilya's heart died within

him.—'Twas not two threatening clouds which clashed, nor yet two mountains moved together, but two stout heroes who rode against each other.

First they fought with their maces, until these snapped short at the hilt,—and wounded one another not. Then they fought with their sharp swords, until these brake,—and wounded one another not; and so likewise with their sharp spears: and when these were shattered they lighted down from their good steeds, and fought hand to hand. All day they fought till even, till midnight, till the white dawn:—and so they did the second day, and likewise the third, and sank to their knees in the earth.

Then Ilya waved his right hand, and his left foot slipped from under him.—'Twas not a gray duck fluttering, but Ilya falling to the damp earth like a stack of hay.

Falcon the Hunter planted himself upon Ilya's white breast, snatched out his dagger of damascened steel, and would have pierced that white breast, closed Ilya's clear eyes, and struck off his turbulent head, and plucked out his heart with his liver; but his arm was stiffened from the shoulder down, and he could not move it.

"O Lord!" said Ilya: "It is written on my right hand that I shall not die in battle." And to Falcon he said: "O brave, good youth! tell me, from what land art thou, from what horde? Who are thy father and mother?"

Then the hunter began to curse: "Full time is it, thou old dog, that thou shouldst shave[1] thy head, and go to a monastery!"

[1] Monks are not tonsured in the Greco-Russian Church. Small tufts are clipped from the ends of the hair, cross-form, over brow, nape and temples; and the hair is worn long, like the hair of all priests.

Ilya's heroic heart grew hot at that, and his young blood boiled. He smote Falcon upon his black breast, and hurled him higher than the standing wood, yet lower than the flying clouds. When Falcon descended again to the damp earth, Ilya leaped to his nimble feet, and sat upon the hunter's breast.

"Tell me now, good youth, thy land, thy horde, thy father's name."

"Sat I on thy white breast," the hunter answered, "so would I not inquire of thee thy name and country. But I would pierce thy white breast, and scan thy restive heart, and scatter thy white body over the plain, to be torn of the gray wolf, and picked by the black crows."

Then Ilya inquired no further of him, but drew forth his dagger. The youth perceived that misfortune was close at hand, and answered:

"I come from the blue sea, from the palaces of gray stone, from mighty Zlatigorka; and my father I do not know. When I rode forth upon the open plain, my mother enjoined me to greet the Old Kazák Ilya of Murom, if I should chance to meet him, but without approaching; to dismount from my good horse and do reverence to him, touching my forehead to the ground."

Then the old man felt compassion; for he knew now that this was his own Falcon, by that fierce Zlatigorka whom he had overcome in single combat, and to whom he had given his golden ring with an inscription, and set with a rich jewel. He took Falcon by his white hands, kissed his sugar lips, and called him his son, weeping greatly as he looked upon him. Then he blessed him with a great blessing.

"Ride, my child, my dear son, whither thou wilt, over the open plain, but shed no blood without

cause, waste no strength in vain. And go now to the blue sea, to thy mother, and greet her lowly from me, from the Old Kazák Ilya of Murom. For shouldst thou fall into the hands of our Russian heroes, thou shouldst hardly escape thence alive."

The secret of his birth overwhelmed the good youth as a great misfortune, and he rode straightway to the blue sea, to the palaces of gray stone, to his mother.

When he came to the fair porch, he shouted with a great voice: "Ho there, thou bold and evil warrior-maid! Come forth to meet the good youth!"

So Zlatigorka came forth to meet him, bowing low, and saluting him. But Falcon met her with his sharp sword, and greeted her so that she fell there upon the fair porch. For he liked it not that he should be the son of a peasant, and of dishonour.

"I go now," quoth he, "to give that old dog over likewise to speedy death, for so dishonoured I will not live."

Therewith he wheeled his good charger about, and rode to the pavilion of white linen. There he fitted a burning shaft to his stout bow, and sent it at Ilya's breast as he lay buried in sleep. But it glanced aside from the wondrous golden cross, three poods in weight, which Ilya wore, and roused him from his slumber. He leaped forth from the tent all unclothed as he was, seized Falcon by his yellow curls, flung him upon the damp earth, cut out his little heart, and scattered his four quarters over the plain.

So Falcon's praise is sung, and Ilya's glory is not diminished; and for ever shall Ilya be celebrated in song.

Sweet Mikailo Ivanovich the Rover

FAIR Sun Vladimir made a great and notable feast to his nobles and heroes. And when all had eaten and drunk their fill, Prince Vladimir paced the banquet hall, waved his right hand, and distributed service to his knights, to Ilya of Murom, Dobrynya Nikitich, and sweet Mikailo Ivanovich.[1] He poured out a cup of green wine, and gave to each sweet mead, saying:

"Taste now a cup of green wine, and serve me, your Prince, with perfect loyalty. Do thou, Old Kazák, Ilya of Murom, the chiefest of our Russian heroes, render a great service. Go thou to the Golden Horde, slay all infidels, both great and small, sparing none. Thou, young Dobrynya, must go to the glorious blue sea, and conquer it, and add territory to Holy Russia. Sweet Mikailo the Rover shall be intrusted with a great mission—he shall go to the black halls in Podolia the crafty, and collect the gifts and tribute for the years that are past, and for this year—for twelve years and for half a year."

So these three heroes rode forth to the Levanidof oak, and swore brotherhood. Ilya was the eldest brother, Mikailo the next, and young Dobrynya the youngest. Then they made a covenant, that he who should first return should await the other two

[1] See Appendix.

at that oak. With that they parted, riding different ways.

When Mikailo was come to the famous black horde, he demanded the gifts and tribute due,—twelve swans, twelve white falcons, and a writing of submission.

But the men of Podolia assembled, and would not surrender the gifts and tribute. Then Mikailo the Rover waxed very wroth, threw back his heroic shoulders, and began to kill and to destroy, so that the men of Podolia yielded and fetched the tribute.

So Mikailo departed thence, and wandered by the blue sea, past warm and peaceful bays, shooting swans and geese. As he turned to leave the precipitous shore, he gazed out upon the quiet bay, and beheld a white swan floating there. Through her feathers she was all gold, and her head was covered with red gold, studded with fair round pearls.

Then Mikailo drew from his bow-case his stout bow, from his quiver a burning arrow, grasped his bow in his left hand, the arrow in his right, and laid the arrow to the silken cord. As he drew the stout bow to his ear, with the burning arrow of seven ells, the cord twanged, the horns of the great bow creaked, and he would have let fly. But the white swan besought him:

"Aï, Mikailo Ivanovich the Rover, shoot not the white swan, else shalt thou have no luck for evermore!"

Then the swan rose over the blue sea upon her white wings, flew to the shore, and turned into a beauteous maiden. Mikailo went to her, took her by her little white hands, by her golden ring, and would fain have kissed her upon her sugar mouth.

But the fair maid said: "Kiss me not, Mikailo Rover, for I am of infidel race, Marya, Princess of

Podolia, and unbaptized. If thou wilt take me to glorious Holy Russia, to famous Kief town the royal, I will go to mother church of God, and receive the Christian faith. Then will we take the golden crowns, and then also shalt thou kiss me if thou wilt." So they set out.

Ilya of Murom was come first to the Levanidof oak, and had brought with him gold in bulk like to a rick of hay. Next came young Dobrynya, and his gold was likewise like unto a hay-rick. The last to come was sweet Mikailo the Rover, and not one copper coin brought he, but only sweet Marya, the White Swan of Podolia. Then spoke his brothers in arms:

"Hast thou been led astray by woman's wiles, Mikailo Rover, that thou bringest hither no treasure? With what face wilt thou present thyself in Kief?" But Mikailo answered them that he would go straightway to Kief with his White Swan, and without red gold.

When they were come to Kief town, Ilya and Dobrynya flung down their vast heaps of treasure, but Mikailo led sweet Marya by the hand.

"How may I reward thee for this thy service?" quoth Vladimir of royal Kief. "Shall I give thee villages with their hamlets, cities with their suburbs or countless golden treasure?"

"None of these do I require," said Mikailo; "for whatsoever thou mightest bestow upon me, that should I squander in drink. Better will it be to give me an ukase with thy royal red seal, that I may go to all the pot-houses and drinking-houses, and drink green wine without payment,—that money be never required of me." Then Prince Vladimir gave Mikailo that ukase with his fair seal gladly, and said:

"I sent them forth to find brides, but these two

youths understood me not,—they coveted gold and silver. In our Holy Russian land, a race of young heroes is more precious than either silver or gold."

Then spoke sweet Mikailo the Rover to Mariushka the White Swan: "Let us wed."

"Nay, not so, Mikailo Rover," she replied, "but under one condition. Let us take a great and solemn oath that when either one of us shall die, the other shall go, living, into the grave with the dead, and there abide for the space of three months."

This oath they took, and were married in God's church. Then they began to live, and take their pleasure; and sweet Mikailo went about from pot-house to pot-house, drinking green wine,—here a cup, there half a bucket, and again a bucket and a half.

—Again spoke Prince Vladimir to Mikailo the Rover: "Lo! Bukar, king of the land beyond the sea, hath sent to demand tribute and gifts for twelve years, and if I give them not, he will come and destroy our royal Kief."

Quoth Mikailo: "Write thou a scroll to that king beyond the sea: write that thou hast despatched the gifts and tribute by Mikailo Ivanovich the Rover. But I will go without tribute."

So he went to Tzar Bukar in the kingdom beyond the sea, and saluted him. And Bukar inquired:

"Whence comest thou, good youth, from what land or horde?"

"From Kief town I come, young Mikailo Ivanovich the Rover. I bring thee gifts and tribute for twelve years from that Fair Sun, Prince Vladimir."

"Where are these gifts and tribute?"

"All were sent in copper coin, and the carts

broke down upon the road; the men are even now mending them."

"How divert ye yourselves with such joy in Russia?" asked Tzar Bukar.

"We play with ashen checkers upon boards of oak."

"Let us play at ashen checkers," quoth Bukar.

So they began to play. Tzar Bukar staked the gifts and tribute, and Mikailo Rover staked his good steed and his turbulent head—and lost. Then they played another bout, and again Tzar Bukar staked the tribute, adding the good steed and the turbulent head. Mikailo staked Marya the White Swan and his own mother—and won. Then Bukar waxed wroth, and staked the half of his kingdom, and Mikailo staked the tribute. As Mikailo won this game, the oaken doors were opened wide, and Ilya of Murom the Old Kazák strode in and spoke:

"My brother in arms, thou knowest not the evil fortune that hath befallen thee. Thou sittest here gaming and taking thy pleasure, while Marya the White Swan, thy young wife, lieth dead in Kief town."

When sweet Mikailo heard that, he sprang up, and hurled the chess-board full at the oaken door, so that the door and its framework flew outward.

"Take thou half the goods and kingdom of Tzar Bukar in this land beyond the sea, my brother in arms," said he, "and rule thou whilst I go home to Kief." Then quickly, quickly, very, very quickly, with speed, he rode to Kief town, to his palace of white stone. There he hired craftsmen, and they made him a spacious coffin of oak, wherein two might stand, or sit, or lie.

When this was done, he made provision of food and green wine for three months. And he fashioned

for himself three pair of pincers and three rods of iron, and took his seat in the coffin with the dead body.

"Why take ye the rods and pincers?" asked Vladimir.

"That the dragons of the under-world may not crawl into the coffin and gnaw my white body."

They drew the White Swan's body to the grave on a sledge, with sweet Mikailo alive beside it.

Then they lowered the coffin into the deep mound, and also his good steed with his rich trappings, and covered them with ruddy yellow sand. Three months did Mikailo the Rover sit therein.

After that, a Dragon of the under-world crawled to the white oak coffin with her brood, pressed upon it, and the hoops began to burst asunder. Mikailo sprang to his nimble feet. A second and yet a third time did the Dragon press, and thereupon the coffin yawned widely.

When that beast espied sweet Mikailo, she rejoiced that she should have a living man to satisfy her hunger, as well as the dead body.

But Mikailo seized the Dragon with his iron pincers, and began to smite her with the iron rods, and to cry: "Aï, thou Dragon of the under-world! Fetch me the waters of life and death [1] to revive my young wife."

"Loose me, sweet Mikailo Rover," the Dragon made answer, "and I will fly to the blue sea, and fetch thee those waters, to revive thy Russian beauty, in three years."

But he ceased not to belabour her stoutly, and without mercy; and she promised to fetch the waters in two years. Yet ceased he not until she had sworn to fetch them within three hours.

[1] These waters figure in several of the popular tales translated in Ralston's *Russian Folk-lore*.

Then said he: "Give me as hostage, one of thy little Dragons." And when she gave it, he set his heel upon the little serpent, and crushed it to dust.

"Why hast thou destroyed my child?" the Dragon asked.

"Fetch me the waters," answered Mikailo, "and I will revive thy child together with my young wife."

Then she made haste and fetched the waters, and sweet Mikailo essayed them first upon the little dragon;—the first time he sprinkled it, the dragon flew together, at the second sprinkling it moved, at the third, it crawled forth from the coffin.

Then he sprinkled his Russian beauty, Marya the White Swan. First her blood played, then she moved, and at last sat upright in the coffin, and spoke: "Long have I slept, and suddenly arisen."

—It was on Sunday, when the nobles, princes, and mighty heroes were coming from the mass. Mikailo shouted with full strength of his head, so that damp mother earth quaked, the waters were troubled with sand, Prince Vladimir's lofty palace rocked to and fro with the shout, and the nobles and heroes spoke among themselves: "Is not this a marvel, brothers, on land and sea?"

But Ilya of Murom made answer: "No marvel is it, nor monster issuing from the waters, or from some distant land. But the hero within the bosom of the earth is wearied of the dead body. Take, therefore, implements of iron, remove the yellow sands, and reach the coffin of white oak."

So they delved, and sweet Mikailo the Rover came forth leading his young wife by the sleeve.

Great fame of this heroic young woman went abroad throughout all lands and hordes. Never

had such a beauty dwelt under the fair red sun. At the fame of her beauty came forty Tzars, Kings and Princes to the Sorochinsky mountains, and wrote a cartel in haste: "If the Fair Sun Prince Vladimir yield not that young heroic woman without conflict or great battle, and in good will, then will we destroy all Kief town."

Thereupon came Prince Vladimir to Mikailo: "Sweet Mikailo Rover," he said, "destroy not my whole kingdom, I pray thee, for the sake of one woman. Deliver up thy young heroic wife, without conflict or great battle."

"Nay, Fair Sun Prince Vladimir," sweet Mikailo made answer. "Deliver up thine own fair Princess Apraxia. But my wife I will not give with my own good will."

Then he disguised himself in woman's apparel, laid on his good steed his great battle-sword, his sharp blade, and rode forth to the Sorochinsky mountains. When he was come near to those Tzars and Kings, he pitched a tent of fair linen, shook down fine white Turkish wheat before his good steed, and lay down to sleep.

The Tzars and Princes sent an ambassador to inquire who had adventured so near them, and Mikailo made answer:

"Marya the White Swan hath come to wed with the forty Tzars, Kings and Princes."

Then all those royal suitors donned their richest raiment, mounted their best steeds, and rode to the pavilion of linen.

"Foolish are ye, ye forty Tzars, Kings and Princes," quoth sweet Mikailo. "I cannot marry all. Grant me therefore to shoot arrows, and he who first returneth with one shall have me."

To this they all agreed, and Mikailo shot forty arrows,—some into the brushwood, some into

the water:—and was it a light task to find them?

When the first Tzar fetched an arrow, Mikailo struck off his head, and hid it in the pavilion, and so he did likewise with the second and the third, until all were slain, and not one of the forty royal suitors was left alive.

Then sweet Mikailo rode back to Kief town, and his brothers in arms met him there, but not his young heroic wife. Mikailo inquired of them where she was, and they replied: "Tzar Vakramey Vakrameevich came hither, and carried off thy young wife to the Volhynian land."

Forthwith rode sweet Mikailo in pursuit, eating not, drinking not, dismounting not from his good steed. When he came to Volhynia town, Marya espied him, and came forth to greet him with a kovsh [1] of the liquor of forgetfulness.

"Aï, sweet Mikailo Rover," said she: "I can neither eat nor drink nor live without thee. But woman's hair is long, her wits are short. Whither they lead us, there we must needs go, and Prince Vladimir gave me against my will. But now drain a bowl of the liquor of health, and thou shalt be yet stronger than of yore, Rover." So Mikailo drained that bowl of the wine of oblivion, and fell unconscious there.

Then the White Swan went to Vakramey Vakrameevich, and spoke this word: "Aï, Tzar Vakramey, do what thou wilt with this man who is as dead."

But he spat in her eye: "One tree doth not make a dark forest, nor is one man a host on the open plain!"

[1] A kind of shallow, boat-shaped bowl with a handle—a sort of ladle for kvas or beer. It is still used to ladle out kvas among the peasantry, in monasteries, and so forth.

Nevertheless she was distrustful, and took Mikailo by his yellow curls, dragged him forth upon the open plain, swung him about her head, and flung him over her shoulder.

"Where stood sweet Rover Mikailo, there henceforth let a white stone stand," she said. "Let it fly over the earth for the space of three years, and after that let it sink through the damp earth!" And sweet Mikailo was turned into a stone straightway.

His brothers in arms, remembering sweet Mikailo, grew weary with longing for him, and said: "Let us go, brothers, to the Volhynian land, to inquire whether our brother be slain or captive there." So they put on the weeds of wandering psalm-singers, threw pouches over their shoulders, took staves of forty poods, and set out.

As they journeyed to the Volhynian land, an aged man came to meet them in the way, and said: "Take me with you as your comrade." And they did so, and came to the land of Volhynia, to Tzar Vakramey.

There they beat upon the earth with their staves and begged alms. The White Swan looked forth from the little lattice window, and perceived that the psalm-singers were come from Kief town, and that the third was a strange man, and said: "Aï, Tzar Vakramey! summon these pilgrims into thy palace, feed them well, and give them wine until they are well drunken, and gold at thy desire."

So Tzar Vakramey called them in; and the Russian heroes inquired of Marya the White Swan where their brother in arms might be, sweet Rover Mikailo.

"I grieve sore for sweet Mikailo the Rover," she made answer; "but I know not where he is."

Then she gave them great alms, and much food and drink, so that they were intoxicated, and lay upon the floor. But the aged man ate not, drank not; and when Marya the White Swan sent twelve knights to kill the psalm-singers, that aged pilgrim brandished his staff, and slew them all, leaving not one alive.

When Tzar Vakramey saw that his whole kingdom could not stand against that one pilgrim, he pondered what might chance when the other two should wake. So he went in haste to his deep vaults, took gold, silver, and fair round pearls, and gave to those psalm-singers; and the next morning they set out for Kief town.

As they journeyed, they came to a stone; and the aged pilgrim said: "I must leave you, brothers. Let us divide our possessions on this stone." Then he began to part the alms into four lots, whereat Ilya could not restrain his restive heart, but spoke: "For whom is that fourth lot, thou stranger pilgrim?"

Said the wandering psalm-singer, the stranger: "It shall belong to him who shall raise this stone, and cast it over his shoulder, so that, falling upon the damp earth, it shall burst asunder."

Ilya of Murom sprang forward, grasped the stone, and raised it to his knees,—and sank to his knees in the damp earth. "Is this the devil or God's might, that is in this stone?" quoth he.

Then Dobrynya essayed to lift it, and could not so much as make a space for the air to pass beneath it. But the aged psalm-singer put his little hand beneath the stone, raised it to his shoulder, and as he flung it, he conjured it: "Break, stone! and let sweet Mikailo the Rover appear in thy stead!"

Out sprang Mikailo, crying, " Fy, fee, brothers ! how long I have slept ! "

Then spoke the aged pilgrim : " Mikailo, when thou art come to Kief town, burn a candle to Saint Mikola. And fare ye well now, ye mighty Russian heroes ! pray to Mikola of Mozhaisk, and he will raise you from the blue sea ! " Therewith he vanished, leaving the money with them, and they saw not whither he went.

Rover Mikailo took leave straightway of his brothers in arms, and returned to the land of Volhynia, and entered the spacious court of Tzar Vakramey's palace, and shouted in a heroic voice.

White Swan Marya heard that cry, and spoke to Tzar Vakramey : " My former husband is come," then ran out to Mikailo with a bowl of wine.

" Aï, sweet Mikailo Rover ! " she said, " without my hero I cannot live. It was not I, but Tzar Vakramey, who imprisoned thee within that white and burning stone. But take now this bowl of wine in one hand, and empty it at a draught, and we will go to Kief town to courteous Prince Vladimir."

Now Mikailo was susceptible to wine and woman's charms. He took the bowl, and quaffed the liquor, and where he drank, there he fell down in a stupor.

Then Marya the White Swan seized him by his yellow curls, and dragged him to a deep dungeon, and there made him fast to the wall with nails through his hands and feet. Yet a fifth nail for his heroic heart was lacking, and Marya ran to the bazaar to buy one.

While she was gone, Anna the Fair, sister to Tzar Vakramey, took a little serving-maid, and went to view the Russian hero ; and as she looked

she loved. Mikailo's stupor was already passed, and he began to entreat her to set him free.

"Take me for thy wife," she made answer, "and I will save thee from vain death."

And he swore to her, "If thou wilt but save me, I will sever the turbulent head of Marya the White Swan, and take the golden crown with thee."

Then she drew out the spikes with her fingernails, took in haste a Tatar chosen for his stature, hair and beauty, and fastened him to the wall in Mikailo's stead, took sweet Mikailo under her cloak of black sables, and led him across the spacious court. Tzar Vakramey espied her, and inquired:

"What hast thou there beneath thy cloak?"

"I took a little maid with me," she answered, "to view the Russian hero, and she is frightened. I have her beneath my cloak, and am leading her to mine own chamber, to comfort her."

Marya the Swan returned with her nail, and perceived not that it was a Tatar in the dungeon, and not her husband.

When fair Anna had brought sweet Mikailo to her lofty tower, she dressed his bleeding wounds with herbs for three months, and healed them, then asked: "Hast thou thy strength as of yore?"

And sweet Mikailo made answer: "If I had but my suit of chain mail, my great battle-sword, and my good steed, I should not fear your Tzar Vakramey."

"There was once a hero among us in past years," quoth Anna the Fair, "and to this day none in our kingdom can wear his armour, nor wield his brand, nor guide his good steed."

Then Mikailo told her what she must do; and she lay as though ailing, and sent word to Tzar Vakramey that some one should be sent to heal her. When the leech came she said:

" I slept, and dreamed that if I might but don a coat of mail, and ride a heroic steed over the open plain, it would be well with me once more."

So the good steed of that hero of past years was led forth; and Rover Mikailo arrayed himself in woman's garb, laid the coat of mail upon the horse, grasped the bridle, and led him forth behind the city wall. There he put on the coat of mail, armed himself, and mounting, leaped the wall, and came to Tzar Vakramey's palace.

When White Swan Marya saw him, she said to Tzar Vakramey: " Lo! my former husband is alive again: pour him a cup of green wine, and mingle the herb of sleep therein."

This Vakramey did; and when Marya presented it to Rover Mikailo, beseeching him to drink it, and return with her to Kief, he would have done her bidding. But Anna the Fair thrust herself out of the lattice window to the girdle, and shrieked in a piercing voice: " Drink not, sweet Rover Mikailo! Remember thine oath. If thou drink that wine, thou hast lost thyself for ever."

Thereupon he dashed aside the cup, drew his sword of damascened steel, and cut off the head of Marya the White Swan.

Vakramey also he would have slain, but that his sister begged for his life. So he left Vakramey in possession of his kingdom, took the Princess Anna the Most Fair, and went to Kief town, to courteous Prince Vladimir. There they were married, and lived in happiness. And sweet Mikailo Ivanovich the Rover built a church to Saint Mikola of Mozhaisk.

Nightingale Budimirovich the Sailor Hero

LOFTY are the heights of heaven, and deep the Ocean-sea, broad are the steppes over all the South, fathomless the Dnyepr's reefs. Swamps and mosses lie over the sea, and frosts afar in the North. Barren are the shores about the White sea, and dark the forests that hem in Smolensk. Lofty hills stand about Chigunsk; wide stand the gates, and sarafans[1] are fair on the Moshy river; round Opskof town spread the open plains.

From beneath the oak, oak, the damp oak, the willow-bush, from the white curling bush, the crimson elm, and the jacinth stone, flowed Mother Volga river: past Kazan, Ryazan, and Astrakhan she flowed, and fell through her seventy mouths into the blue sea, the Turkish sea!

'Twas not the storm-clouds gathering, nor blue clouds rolling up, but thirty dark-red ships and three, sailing from out the glorious sea. From Kadol's Isle in the land of Ledenetz they ran, over the many-bayed sea, with green curving lines of shore, towards Mother Dnyepr river.

One ship, the fairest, sailed before, as flies the falcon clear, and proudly she bore her head on high. Like a dragon fierce her prow was fashioned,

[1] A long, sleeveless tunic for women.

her sides like the aurochs of Litva.[1] In place of ears were two sharp spears,—little white ermines hung thereon. Her brows were rare black sables from Siberia, from Yakutsk, and her eyes fair jacinth stones; rare gems, self-luminous, were they, not for beauty, but for guidance in the dark autumn nights. Her mane was two red foxes, her tail, two white sea-bears. The sails and pennons on that dark-red ship were of the silk of Samarcand; the cables and cordage likewise of that silk, that weareth not, teareth not; and the masts of gold, and the anchors from Siberia, of damascened steel. For oh! my brothers, our ship was fair adorned!

—Amid the ship stood a green tiled bower, its ceiling hung with black cut velvet, its walls with sables black. Its covering was foxes and martens, long and downy, from Siberian caves.

In that green tiled bower, on carven seats of precious fishes' teeth, sat Nightingale Budimirovich :[2] on his right sat his lady mother, young Ulyana Vasilievna, on his left his body-guard of three hundred youths, none better. Shoes of green morocco were on their feet, and golden buckles with silver tongues; their garments were of fine scarlet cloth; on their heads were Norman caps.

On his sounding gusly played Nightingale, and solaced his lady mother. String after string he touched, and blended his voice therewith in tones from Novgorod and Jerusalem, in ditties from over the sea blue and glorious, from Kadol's Isle and the green-bayed shore.

Then quickly he went forth, and began to pace the ship, to shake back his yellow curls, and speak this word :

" Brothers, and brave guards of mine! Hearken to your chief, and do the deed commanded : take

[1] Lithuania. [2] See Appendix.

rods of iron, sound the reefs, scan the blue sea, that we run not into the shallows, but sail securely past."

So they sounded the depths, and ran in safety past the perilous reefs. But Nightingale still paced the deck, shook back his curls, and gave further command to his good youths:

"Listen to your chieftain, and do the thing commanded: climb now the mast, and from the topmost yard look toward famous Kief town, and see if it be far."

They answered from the yard:

"Aï, young Nightingale Budimirovich! Kief town standeth close at hand."

Then he gave commandment that they should run into the harbour, and cast out steel anchors upon the steep shores, and throw out three landing stages; one of red gold for Nightingale himself, one of silver for his good body-guard, and one of bronze for his lady mother, the honourable widow, Ulyana Vasilievna.

Then young Nightingale took his golden keys, and from his treasure-chests, iron bound, he drew great store of treasure: forty forties of black sables, fox and marten skins without number, countless geese and swans, fine damask on which the red gold corrodeth not, the fair silver breaketh not. Not dear was the red gold, the pure silver upon that damask fair; that which was beyond price was the pattern from beyond the sea, of Nightingale's own devising. All these things he laid on a dish of gold, and went to Prince Vladimir's palace of white stone, to the banquet hall. There he crossed himself as prescribed, did reverence as enjoined, to all, to two, to three, to four sides, and to the royal Prince in particular, greeting him and his Princess.

"Hail, thou bold and goodly youth!" spoke Vladimir then. "I know neither thy name nor country, whether thou be a Tzar or Tzarevich, a King or Crown Prince, or a fierce Kazák from the peaceful Don."

"None of these am I," quoth the youth; "but young Nightingale Budimir's son, from the blue sea, from the Isle of Kadol in the land of Ledenetz." Then he offered his gifts to Vladimir and his Princess. The Princess was greatly pleased thereat, accepting and praising them all; and in particular the damask, the like of which for richness, and cunningness of device, was not in Kief nor ever had been. And the Princess Apraxia entreated Vladimir that he would give Nightingale sweet viands, green wine, and sweet mead.

So Vladimir feasted him, and spake in pleasure: "Aï, young Nightingale, what guerdon shall I bestow upon thee in return for all these great gifts? Wilt thou have cities with their villages, or golden treasure?"

And Nightingale made answer, as he paced the banquet hall: "None of these do I need, for I have all these things at my desire. But grant me now a little plat, whereon to build three golden-crowned towers, within the green garden of fair Love, where they bake pepper-cakes and little tarts; where pancakes are sold, and children barter wares."

"As thou knowest, so do," answered courteous Prince Vladimir: "build where thou wilt, in my green royal gardens."

"Thanks, royal Vladimir, for thy princely gift," quoth Nightingale, and went straightway to his men.

"Brothers, my brave, stout guards, do now the thing commanded: put off your kaftans of scarlet

cloth, and your fair green shoes; don raiment fit for labour, of elkskin, and heavy foot-gear. Take sharp steel axes, go to Love's garden, root up the oaks and elms, hew oaken beams, and build me there this night, three golden-crowned towers, with roofs overlapping and rich halls, so that I may dwell there at to-morrow's dawn."

Then late, right late at even, his good youths laboured like woodpeckers tapping trees, and at midnight the palace was complete. Three-towered it stood, with golden domes which merged, three latticed halls, and in the midst a guest-chamber. Full richly were the towers adorned. In the heavens stood a sun—and in the towers a sun; in heaven a moon—a moon in the towers likewise; stars and dawns in heaven and in the towers, and all beauty under heaven.

—Early chimed the bells for matins, when Love the Fair awoke from sleep, washed herself very white, and gazed from her latticed casement upon her garden green. And lo! a marvel presented itself to her—three gold-domed towers stood in her garden fair.

"Ho there, nurses and handmaidens mine!" Love cried, "come hither and view this marvel. But yestere'en that hillock was bare, and now 'tis fully crowned."

"Prithee, dear Love," they answered, "look thyself! For thy fate hath come to thy court."

Then Love put her shoes in haste upon her naked feet, flung her robe upon one shoulder, and ran out to walk in her garden fair. When she came to the first, the grated tower, she heard a clashing and a clinking, and listened there: 'twas Nightingale's brave body-guard telling over his countless treasures of gold. As she listened at the second tower of glass, she caught a whispering

—the honourable young widow Ulyana Vasilievna praying God for her dear son. And at the third tower of red gold was again clashing and great noise; for fair young Nightingale sat therein, on a stool of precious fishes' teeth,[1] playing on his harp and singing. String after string he plucked, accompanying his voice in songs from Novgorod and Jerusalem, and all the little ballads from beyond the blue Turkish sea, and Kadol's Isle, with its many bays and green incurving shores.

The maiden rejoiced greatly, and was likewise greatly terrified, and listened all that day until the eventide. Then she entered the lofty tower, prayed God, and bowed to Nightingale. Nightingale returned her greeting, and she spoke:

"Young Nightingale Budimir's son! thou art unwedded; take me, a fair maid, to wife."

To this Nightingale made answer: "Thou art pleasing to me, maiden, in all things save this one; —that I like not,—thou hast wooed a husband for thyself. This should not be, fair damsel. Better were it for thee to be at home, drawing water, milking the cows, feeding the calves."

Upon that, with great shame she turned and ran to her home.

Then young Nightingale Budimirovich donned with speed his richest apparel, and went to Prince Vladimir of royal Kief, in state, to woo, seated himself in the great place, and spoke this word:

"Aï, thou Prince of royal Kief town! Thou hast a much-loved niece, young Love. Give her to me now for my wife."

So Prince Vladimir betrothed the fair maiden, his niece, and the young people went to God's church to take the golden crowns.

[1] Walrus-tusk.

Then in haste did young Nightingale remove from Love's garden his golden-crowned towers, made all things as they were at the first, and betook himself to his dark-red ship with his lady mother, his good body-guard, and his fair young wife, and sailed away to his own land. There he dwelt henceforth, and his wife, in joy and peace.

Danilo the Huntsman and his Wife

IN Kief town the Fair Sun Prince Vladimir held a feast, great, honourable, and merry. And when the throng of princely nobles and mighty heroes had eaten half their fill, and were half drunken with wine, they began to boast among themselves. One vaunted his wealth, another his foreign merchandise, another his style of living or his estates, his prowess or his young wife.

Then spoke our father Prince Vladimir:

"Aï, all ye my princely nobles, and heroes mighty! ye are all married, while I alone go unwed. Know ye not where I may find a bride with whom to hold sweet converse, of whom I may make boast in banquet hall and bower, to whom ye may pay homage?"

Putyatin Putyatovich made answer: "Prince Vladimir, little father! take to thyself the bride of Danilo the Huntsman. For I have journeyed much in foreign lands, have viewed many princesses, and proved their understandings. One was fair of face, but lacked wit; the wit of another exceeded her beauty. Yet never found I so fair a woman, and so fitting, as the bride of Danilo the Huntsman, Vasilisa Mikulichna. She is fair of face, and of good understanding: she knoweth well how to read and write the Russian tongue,

and is learned likewise in the legends of saints and in church-singing. None is more meet to be our Princess and our mother."

This word displeased Vladimir greatly, and he said: "Where was it ever seen or heard that a woman should be taken from a living husband?" And he commanded that Putyatin should be executed.

But the man was crafty, and slipped aside: "Ho, little father, Prince Vladimir," he cried; "wait! hang me not in haste; command me to speak yet a word." So Vladimir commanded him.

"Let us send Danilo on some distant service, from which there is no return, to the Island of Buyan.[1] Command him to slay the fierce beast with blue feathers and bristly hide, and to take out its heart.—Let us send him afar on the open plain, to the Levanidof meadow, to the thundering spring: command him to take the white-throated bird, and fetch it hither to thy royal banquet, to slay the fierce lion, and bear him hither."

Prince Vladimir liked this counsel well; but Ilya of Murom, the Old Kazák, spoke up, and said: "Little father, Prince Vladimir! if thou slay the bright falcon, yet shalt thou not capture the white swan!"

But this speech angered Prince Vladimir, and he set Ilya in a deep dungeon.

Then he called Danilo, and commanded him to go upon this quest. And Danilo went forth from the richly spread tables of oak, the sweet viands and honeyed drinks, mounted his good steed in the spacious court, and rode homeward.

His young wife Vasilisa in her lofty castle watched him as he came, and saw that he went

[1] See Appendix: *Alatyr Stone.*

not merrily: his turbulent head drooped low, his clear eyes were bent upon damp mother earth. When she had inquired of him whether Prince Vladimir had duly honoured him with cup and seat at the feast, he answered that he had had the highest seat at the board, and the cup had come to him first of all.

"But woman's intrigues have wrought my ruin," he said. "Fetch me now my little quiver with a hundred and fifty darts." Nevertheless she gave him the great quiver with full three hundred, whereat he reproved her: "Thou art ill-taught. Why art thou thus disobedient? Fearest thou me not?"

But Vasilisa was not angry, and said: "My hope, my heart's friend, young Danilo the Huntsman! a spare dart may prove of service to thee."

So the good youth journeyed to the Isle of Buyan. When he espied the fierce beast, he grasped his stout bow firmly, fitted a gilded arrow to the silken cord, slew the beast, and took out his heart and liver. Then he sat down to eat bread, and carve the white swan. And as he looked toward Kief town, he beheld not white snows gleaming nor black clouds gathering fast, but a Russian host flashing black and white against Danilo. Then shed he burning tears, and said: "Of a truth, I am greatly out of favour with Prince Vladimir! and my service he requireth not."

With that Danilo seized his sharp sword, and cut down the Russian host to a man. And after a little space, he looked again towards Kief town: —'twas not two fierce beasts coursing over the open plain, nor yet two damp oaks quivering; but two great heroes riding, Nikita, Danilo's own brother, and Dobrynya, his brother in arms.

When Danilo saw that, he wept bitterly, and spoke: "Of a truth, the Lord is wroth with me, and Prince Vladimir greatly displeased: for when was it ever heard or seen that brother should be sent to contend against brother?"

Thereupon he caught up his sharp spear, thrust the butt-end into the damp earth, and fell upon the point; and as it pierced his white breast, Danilo closed his clear eyes for ever.

When the heroes came to him, they wept sore, and turned back, and told Prince Vladimir: "Bold Danilo is dead."

Then Vladimir collected a great following, seated himself in a golden chariot, and went to Danilo's dwelling. When he was come thither, he entered the lofty tower, and kissed Vasilisa's sugar mouth.

But Vasilisa said: "Little father, Prince Vladimir, kiss not my red mouth, without my friend Danilo."

But Vladimir commanded her: "Don thy fairest apparel, thy wedding robes."

This she did, then took a sharp knife, and said: "Grant me now, Prince Vladimir, to look upon my dear friend, and to take leave of his white body."

So Vladimir permitted her, and sent with her two heroes. And, when she went to look, lo! they were making the coffin.

"Make it wide, ye master carpenters," quoth Vasilisa, "that his heroic bones may have space to turn!"

And to the two heroes she said:

"Go now, ye heroes, and say to Prince Vladimir, that he must not leave my body upon the open plain, but must lay it with the body of my dear friend Danilo the Huntsman."

Upon that, she took her sharp knife, pierced her white breast, and closed her clear eyes.

The two heroes wept, and returning, told all to Prince Vladimir.

Then Vladimir released Ilya of Murom from the dungeon, and kissed him on the temple. "Well hast thou spoken, thou Old Kazák, Ilya of Murom!" he said, and graciously bestowed upon him a mantle of sables. But to Putyatin he gave a kettle of pitch.[1]

[1] It is difficult to determine the epoch of this *bylina*. Possibly, in some version of the song which has not come down to us, Vladimir is represented as courting Danilo's wife during the lifetime of the Princess Apraxia. This would answer to the historical Vladimir before his baptism.

Ilya and the Adventure of the Three Roads

THE old man rode over the open plain. From youth to old age he had ridden, and he marvelled at himself. "Oh age, old age!" he cried: "oh deep old age of three hundred years! Thou hast overtaken the Kazák in the open plain, thou hast caught me like a black raven, thou hast alighted upon my turbulent head. —And youth, thou youth, my early youth! Thou hast flown away, youth, over the open plain, like the falcon clear!"

In the open plain the light snows gleamed not white, little clouds darkled not, the blades of the steppe grass waved not.—But over the open plain still rode the old Kazák of the Don, on his heroic steed. The horse under him was fiery as a wild beast, and Ilya as he sat was like the falcon bright. No ferriage asked the Kazák, for good Cloudfall leaped lake and river, wide morass, and floating swamp.

As he rode, he came to a place where three ways met; and there stood a burning white stone, Alatyr,[1] whereon was written: "Whoso rideth to the right shall gain great wealth, whoso goeth to the left a wife, he that fareth straight on, his death."

The old Kazák halted, marvelled, and shook his gray head in thought.

[1] See Appendix.

"Wherefore should I, an old man, crave wealth? I have countless store of golden treasure. And why should the old man win a wife? There is no joy in an ugly wife, and a fair one is taken for the envy of other men. A young wife is coveted of others; an old wife would lie on the oven, and eat kisel,[1] she would sit by the oven, and order the old husband about. Nay; but I will ride that way where I may win death."

Then the good youth, the Old Kazák, rode on. Hardly had he passed Korela the Accursed, not yet had he attained to India the Rich, when he entered a gloomy forest. There stood a band of forty thousand robbers, and they coveted Ilya's good steed.

"In all our lives," said they, "we have beheld no such horse. Halt then, good youth, halt, thou Russian hero!" And they would have robbed him; but Ilya said:

"Ho, ye robber horde! Ye may not kill the old man, nor rob him. I have no treasure with me, save five hundred roubles. The cross on my breast is worth but five hundred, my cloak of sables three thousand; my cap of forty poods, and my sandals of the seven silks, five hundred each; my fine kaftan of orange-tawny taffeta is valued at but little, my braided bridle rimmed with precious stones, but a thousand roubles. My Cherkessian saddle bordered with eagle's feathers—that eagle which flew not over lofty mountains, but over the blue sea—is priceless. Between my Cloudfall's eyes, and under his ears, are jewels fair, clear jacinth stones,—not for youthful vanity, but because of the autumn nights. Wheresoever my good steed goeth, he can see thirty versts on all

[1] A sourish pudding, made with potato flour, used during Fasts.

sides, thirty versts well told; for they gleam like the bright moon.—And my good steed Cloudfall is worth nothing at all."

The robbers jeered as they answered: "Thou art old and garrulous, Kazák! Since we have roamed this white world, never saw we such a fool. The aged fool hath told the truth as though we had demanded it! Seize the old fellow, children!" And they would have dragged the Old Kazák from his horse.

But young Ilya of Murom drew a fiery dart from his quiver, and sped it forth from his stout bow, and struck the damp mother of oaks. The ringbarked oak was shivered in fragments, and the earth was ploughed up round about.

The robbers were greatly terrified thereat, and lay senseless for the space of five hours. Then they entreated him:

"Good youth, great Russian hero! Enter thou into comradeship with us. Take what thou wilt of golden treasure, flowered garments, horses and herds."

Ilya laughed: "Eh, brothers, mine enemies," quoth he, "I have no wish to feed your sheep."

Then he turned back to the white and burning stone Alatyr, erased the old inscription, and wrote anew:

"I have ridden this road and have not been slain." So ended the adventure of the first road.

Again Ilya of Murom the Old Kazák sallied forth into the open plain. He rode three hundred versts, and lo! before him in a green meadow, stood a marvel of marvels, a wonder of wonders. Too small was it to be called a city, too large to be a village. It was, in truth, but a fair palace of white stone, with golden roofs, lofty walls, and three-cornered towers.

When Ilya came to that palace, there issued forth from it forty damsels, and with them came also the Princess Zenira the Most Fair. The beautiful Princess took the old man by his white hands, by his golden ring, kissed his sugar mouth, and bade him enter the palace of white stone to feast with her.

"Long have I journeyed in Holy Russia, but such a marvel I have never yet beheld," said Ilya. Then she led him in. The good youth crossed himself as prescribed, made salutation as enjoined, to all sides, and lowest of all to the fair Princess, who placed him at the table of white oak, and fetched him sugar viands and sweet mead.

"Eat not to satiety, good youth," said she, "and drink not to drunkenness, for there is more to come."

But Ilya said: "I have journeyed three hundred versts, and my hunger is great," and ate and drank his fill.

Then Zenira the Fair led him to a rich warm chamber, to a bed of yew wood and ivory, with soft cushions of down.

"Lie thou next yon brick wall, thou bold and goodly youth," spake the Princess.

"Nay," said Ilya, "I will lie upon the outer edge, for I often rise in the night to visit my good steed."

Thereupon he seized her by her white breast, and flung her upon the bed of yew wood, against the wall.

Now that bed of yew was false; it turned, and the fair Princess was hurled down into her dungeons, forty fathoms deep.

Then the good old youth went forth into the spacious courtyard, and spoke to the nurses, women and faithful servitors: "Give me the golden keys

which undo the dungeon doors. Show me the way to those deep vaults."

So they showed him; and he found the way choked with yellow sand, and barred with vast logs of wood.

He had no need of the golden keys; he tore the locks asunder with his hands, forced the doors back with his heels, until they flew from their frames. Then from the dungeons forty Tzars and Tzareviches, forty Kings and Princes, their heirs, together with Dobrynya Nikitich, Alyosha Popovich, and many more, an innumerable host, sprang to their nimble feet, and came forth.

All bowed before the Old Kazák, and thanked him for showing them once more the white world."

"Go hence, ye Tzars, to your empires," spake Ilya, "ye Kings, to your kingdoms, to your wives, and children, and pray God for the Old Kazák, for Ilya of Murom."

But when the fair Princess came forth, Ilya took her by her white hands, bound her to three untamed horses, and drove them apart, so that they scattered over the open plain, here a hand, there a foot, and everywhere her white body. All her estates and treasure he divided among those bold and goodly youths, the strong and mighty heroes; and her palace of white stone he gave over to the flames.

Again the Old Kazák returned to the white stone, crossed out the old inscription, and wrote a new one:

"This legend is falsely written; I have ridden that way, yet am I still unwed!"

"I will go now," quoth he, "where wealth is to be won."

Then the old man rode over the plain; three hours, three hundred versts he rode, and came at

length to a green meadow where deep pits were dug, and to a gloomy forest where was a vault filled with treasure, fair gold, pure silver, and fine seed-pearls; and on the vault was an inscription: "This treasure shall fall to Ilya of Murom."

Ilya reflected; and having hired wise and cunning craftsmen, he built on that spot a monastery and a cathedral church. And he instituted there church singing, and the sound of bells. "Let him whose that treasure was come for it now," quoth Ilya of Murom, and returned to famous Kief town, to courteous Prince Vladimir the Fair Sun.

Vladimir inquired of him: "Where hast thou tarried so long, thou bold and goodly youth, thou Old Kazák, Ilya of Murom?"

And Ilya related his Adventure of the Three Ways, and all that he had done, to Fair Sun Prince Vladimir.

Dobrynya and Alyosha

FROM beneath white curling beeches, and Levanidof the wonder-working cross, from beneath the holy relics of Boris, and white Alatyr stone, rose, rose and flowed, flowed and rolled, swift Mother Volga river.

Broad and far ran Mother Volga past Kazan, and broader yet by Astrakhan; many a river did our Mother Volga flood receive into her bosom, and yet more brooks did she ingulf. A vast sweep she gave at Dalinsky, along the lofty mountains of Sorochinsky and Smolensk's gloomy forests; in a bed of three thousand versts she ran, and fell into the Caspian Sea, through seventy mouths; and broad is her flood at Novgorod. And this, brothers, is no fable, no play of words: neither is it Dobrynya's tale, which shall straightway find beginning.

—Dobrynya went to royal Kief town, where courteous Prince Vladimir had made an honourable feast to his princes, nobles, heroes, and warrior-maids.

The long day drew towards evening, the honourable feast waxed merry, the fair sun sank to the west. And the feast grew ever merrier, and the heroes began to boast of many things,—the wise man of his father and mother, the foolish of his young wife. Vladimir the Prince grew warm as

he paced the banquet hall, and he went forth upon the fair round porch to gaze off on the open plain.

Far, afar over the open plain, the clear falcon flew not, nor fled the small white hare; the little ermine galloped not, weaving the prints of his small pretty paws. But from the verge of the plain a bold and goodly youth emerged,—little Ilya, the glorious, of Murom,—rode straight to Prince Vladimir's court, and entered the banquet hall.

He crossed himself, and did reverence as enjoined, to all four sides, and seated himself at the oaken board in the great corner of honour, on the bench of precious fishes' teeth. Already had the guests tasted bread and salt, and now were carving the white swan, when Vladimir came into the hall, stroked his black curls, and spoke:

"Ho, ye princes, nobles, strong and mighty heroes all, and all ye bold warrior-maids! stand for the Christian faith, for me, your Prince Vladimir, and for my Princess Apraxia, for widows, orphans, and unhappy women! Whom shall we send to defend the mighty barrier, and wage battle with the Discourteous Knight? For he hath written me a challenge to single combat, and is now flying hither in form of a raven. Whom shall we send to fight that raven, and to collect tribute of the Golden Horde which hath been due us these twelve years and a half, to visit the disobedient hordes, and clear the straight roads to the stern King Etmanyla Etmanylovich, to beat back the white-eyed Finns, to exterminate the Circassians of Pyatigorsk, the Kalmyks and Tatars?"

All at the feast held their peace, each hiding behind some lesser man. Then glorious Ilya of

Murom, that bold and goodly youth, stepped forward, and stood firm upon his nimble feet, and bowed low until his white face touched his feet.

"Foolish are ye, Russian heroes, to hold your peace thus, uttering no word! Not long is it, brothers, since I returned from the open plain. I have dwelt upon the Sorochinsky road, at the heroic ditch of defence, contending in single combat and waging battle these twelve years. Thither flew the Discourteous Knight in form of a black raven, but would not show himself to my eyes; else would I have slain that dog of a churl with my stout bow. But if I go, there will be none to defend the barrier. Let us therefore send young Dobrynya Nikitich."

Then Dobrynya drained a cup of green wine which Prince Vladimir himself brought him, but tarried not long at the feast, going thence in uncheerful mood. When he came to his mother he wept bitterly.

"Fair my lady mother," he lamented, "why didst thou bear me in an unpropitious hour, without genius, strength, great beauty, or tall stature, great wealth, or curling hair? Rather shouldest thou, fair and honourable widow, Afimya Alexandrovna, my mother, have wrapped my turbulent head in a sleeve of white linen, and cast me like a white pebble into the black Turkish sea. Then I should have lain at the bottom of the sea like a precious stone; the stormy winds would not have blown upon me, and I should not have roamed through Holy Russia, shedding innocent blood, causing tears to fathers and mothers, and making little children orphans."

Then his mother made answer: "Gladly would I have borne thee with the genius and fortune of Ilya of Murom, the strength of Hero Svyatogor,

the mincing gait of Churilo Plenkovich, the beauty of Osip Most Fair,[1] the daring of Alyosha Popovich, the wealth of Sadko the merchant of Novgorod, the fame of Volgá Buslaevich, the curls of the Tzar Kudryanisha.[2] But to Dobrynya God gave courtesy alone; and other gifts were not bestowed upon thee."

He said to her: "Fair and good my mother, thy youth hath neither good steed nor heroic trappings."

"Go through the first unused stable, Dobrynya," his mother answered him, "and in the second choose for thyself a good, well-broken steed. And if none there shall please thee, descend into the deep vault where standeth a good heroic steed bound with twelve silver chains, with twelve fine bits of silk,—not of our silk, but of the silk of Samarcand, which weareth not nor teareth. There lie also heroic trappings and all caparisons meet for a youth."

Dobrynya inquired no further. He sprang to his nimble feet, ran to the first stable, found there no horse that pleased him, and in the second none likewise, and so descended to the deep vault. There he beheld a goodly steed, and fell down before his right fore-foot.

"Thou good heroic steed," he cried, "thou hast served my father and grandfather; serve now also Dobrynya on his heroic quests." Then he unchained and loosed the horse, and saddled him, girding him with twelve girths of the silk of Samarcand, the indestructible, and a thirteenth for heroic strength, lest the good steed should spring

[1] The biblical Joseph figures under this name in the religious songs.

[2] Curly, literally; but said to be in reality a corruption of the Emperor Hadrian's name.

from under the saddle and throw the good youth upon the open plain.

After that he arrayed himself. Under the heels of his shoes of green morocco, studded with golden pins, sparrows might fly; from their awl-like beaks an egg might roll; his cap was gilded,—not for youthful grace, but for heroic might. Next he put on a coat of mail, not heavy (in weight but ninety poods), and set his foot in the stirrup of damascened steel.—More lightly than a hare he sprang, more sharply than a little ermine turned, seated himself in the Cherkessian saddle, and came to the palace of white stone, to his mother, and said: "Give me thy leave to ride upon this heroic quest."

So his fair, good mother laid the cross of blessing on him, and led to his left stirrup his beloved wife, young Nastasya Mikulichna, and having bade him farewell, went into the palace and wept bitter tears, wiped them away with a fair linen cloth, and said: "The warm and fair red sun which made my midsummer hath set behind the gloomy forests and lofty hills, behind mosses and wide lakes: and now the bright moon alone lighteth me: young Nastasya, my son's bride, alone tarrieth with me."

Young Nastasya, as she stood by his stirrup, began to inquire of him: "Aï, my dearest Dobrynya Nikitich! when may I expect thee from the open field? Tell me when I may await thee from yonder lands."

"I will tell thee, fair Nastasya. Three years shalt thou wait for Dobrynya; if in that time I am not here, then wait yet another three. And when that space of six years is past, and I am not returned from the open field, wait for me three years more, and yet three years. And if after twelve years I come not, then shall I not be among

the living. Then live a widow, or marry, at thy pleasure. Choose a prince, a noble, or a mighty Russian hero. But wed not with my brother in arms, Alyosha Popovich, that scoffer at women. For a brother in arms is worse than an own brother. Therefore, marry a robber or a brigand if thou list, but not Alyosha, the scorner of maidens: for he loveth to mock at women, young widows, and fair maids."

—They saw the good youth as he mounted, they saw him not as he rode: from the court he departed not by the gates, he traversed the plain not by the highway. His steed's first leap was over the city walls, the second compassed three versts, and of the third leap no trace could be found evermore.

—Year followed year as the falcon flieth. Three years Nastasya waited, and Dobrynya came not.

But Alyosha Popovich was cunning. He rode forth into the open plain, and after that turned back and came to Nastasya.

"Lo, Nastasya Mikulichna!" quoth he: "as I roamed the open plain but yesterday, I saw Dobrynushka dead. He lieth with his head in a willow bush, his nimble feet amid the plume-grass tall; in his yellow curls small wood birds have woven their nests; Polish ravens have plucked out his clear eyes; silken grass springeth through his white breast, and amid it azure flowerets blossom. His weapons are scattered, his good steed roameth the plain, and his wife still liveth a widow. Therefore, lady, wed now with me."

"Nay, Alyosha Popovich," Nastasya answered, "thou hast not been on the open plain; thou hast but wandered with the dogs in the outskirts of the town."

—Day followed after day, as the rain doth fall, week grew on week as groweth the grass, and like the river, year flowed after year. Six full years passed. Alyosha came again to the palace of white stone, did reverence and crossed himself as enjoined, seated himself upon the wall-bench, and began to woo young Nastasya for his bride.

"Now marry me, a goodly youth, Nastasya! Dobrynya will never more return from the open plain."

"Aï, bold Alyosha Popovich! I have kept a man's oath, and now will I keep a woman's. If in twelve years Dobrynya return not, then I shall be free to live a widow or to wed. But thee, Alyosha, I may never wed."

Then Alyosha was not merry, and said: "Thou mayest turn and strive thy uttermost, but none other wilt thou get for a husband; and so shalt thou wed with me."

Thereupon he went forth from the palace of white stone; and time passed on until the full term of years was accomplished.

Again he came to woo with Fair Sun Prince Vladimir, and sat upon the wall-bench as before.

"Marry me now, young Nastasya Mikulichna," said he.

"I will not marry thee," she answered.

The Fair Sun Prince Vladimir spoke: "Young Nastasya Mikulichna, if thou wed not bold Alyosha Popovich, I will shut thee up in a nunnery; I will give thee in marriage to Murza the Tatar in the Lithuanian land; I will make thee my cowherd."

But she still made answer: "Nay, I will not wed bold Alyosha."

Then they said: "If thou wilt not do this freely, we will take thee by force." Thereupon they took her by her white hands, led her to the cathedral,

and betrothed her to bold Alyosha. After that, Fair Sun Vladimir took their hands and led them to his palace, where he made for Alyosha a great banquet, and an honourable feast, and bade to it many of all degrees. And the honourable widow Afimya Alexandrevna wailed: "Now hath my bright moon set also!"

—Now Dobrynya had gone to the Golden Horde, and had fought for royal Kief and his native land all those years, wandering far through many countries. When Nastasya married Alyosha, he was far away upon the open plain, beyond the glorious blue sea. As the good youth sat in his tent, diverting himself with chess, upon a board of gold, he knew not of the misfortune which had befallen him. Then flew thither a dove and his mate, perched upon a damp oak, and began to coo:

"There is feasting to-day in Kief town, for Dobrynya's young wife is wedded to Alyosha Popovich."

When Dobrynya heard that, he sprang to his nimble feet, and flung his golden board upon the damp earth, whereat mother earth quaked. Then he saddled his good steed with haste, fell down before his right fore-foot, and besought him:

"Aï, my good steed Fly-alone! Thou hast borne me hither in three years. Now bear me home in three hours to royal Kief town."

Then he mounted his good steed, and quickly, quickly, very, very quickly, with speed, rode Dobrynya from beyond the blue sea. Good Fly-alone left the earth; higher than the standing wood he soared, yet lower than the flying clouds. He leaped the lakes and rivers, dashed through the dusky forests, galloped round the dark blue sea,—afar in the open plain, 'twas not the first light snow descending, nor a white hare coursing

fleet, nor snowy partridge fluttering, but a bold and goodly youth swift riding. Straight to Kief town he rode; not through the gates, but over the city walls, past the angled towers, he entered, and took his way to the honourable widow's dwelling. He asked no leave of the porters at the gate, nor of the keepers at the doors. Thrusting them aside, he broke open the portals, and entered unbidden, unannounced, and boldly, the honourable widow's dwelling. "Hail, honourable widow, Afimya Alexandrevna!" he said when he had crossed himself and done reverence as was the usage.

The porters and door-keepers, entering, made complaint of the bold youth, and the widow said:

"Why, bold and goodly youth, hast thou entered the orphaned dwelling unannounced? Were my dear child living, young Dobrynya Nikitich, he would have cut off thy turbulent head for thine unmannerly ways. Were he but alive, all the drunken boors would not come to jeer at this unprotected dwelling. But twelve years have passed since my fair red sun set for ever."

"Mournest thou not in vain?" said Dobrynya. "But yesterday I parted from Dobrynya, and not a week hath passed over since we exchanged crosses. He went to Tzargrad, and I came to Kief. He bade me, his own brother, inquire for his dear wife, young Nastasya. Where is she?"

"Go forth, thou pot-house boor, and mock not a poor old woman! Though I already totter with extreme old age, yet will I myself put thee out by force."

"Aï, my fair lady mother," answered young Dobrynya. "Knowest thou not thy beloved son, young Dobrynya Nikitich?"

"Young Dobrynya had shoes of morocco upon his feet, but thine, thou sot, are torn and patched. Dobrynya's face was white and red—thine is dark and dust-begrimed. His eyes were clear as the sea falcon's, but thine are troubled. Young Dobrynya had yellow locks, curling in three tiers upon his head,—thine hang upon thy shoulders. Upon his curls rested a fair new cap, and his raiment was flowered; but thy garments are rent and pieced."

"My garments have become worn in these twelve years past, fair my lady mother; my shoes are rubbed through on my stirrups, my white face the fierce heats have discoloured, and my cap hath been soaked with frequent rains."

"If thou be indeed young Dobrynya, my son, thou hast a birthmark upon thy right breast."

Then Dobrynya showed her the mark. His mother heeded not her age, but ran and caught him by his white hands, and kissed his sugar mouth, calling him her beloved son.

"Where now is my young wife?" he asked. "Where is Nastasya, that she cometh not to meet me, returning from the open plain?"

"The clear falcon hath flown into my court, but the white swan hath fluttered forth from it," his mother answered, and told him all Alyosha's treachery, and how it was now the third day of the wedding feast.

"Fetch quickly my minstrel's [1] garment, which lieth upon the table in the new chamber, and my little gusly of maple-wood, from the peg in the cellar."

Then he arrayed himself in haste, and strung his harp, and took his way to the palace of white stone, where the wedding guests were making merry.

[1] *Skomorok*, buffoon, *jongleur*, minstrel, jester.

The gate-keepers had been strictly charged to admit no one, but when Dobrynya gave them gold they permitted him to go in to the feast.

When he was come to the banquet hall, he crossed himself, and did reverence on all sides, and in particular to the Prince and Princess, and to young Nastasya Mikulichna.

"Fair Sun, Prince of royal Kief," he said, "is there not a little place and small for the little jester, where he may play upon his harp?"

"Aï, little minstrel!" said Prince Vladimir, "all the places are filled; but there is yet a small place upon the earthen oven—the minstrel's place."

Dobrynya was agile of foot: lightly he sprang upon the oven, and tuned his harp. One string he tuned to Kief, one to Tzargrad, and the third to Jerusalem; and the tones he sang were from over the sea; but the theme was Dobrynya's adventures, and the men of Kief town.

"Ho, little minstrel," quoth Prince Vladimir, "thy place is not upon the oven. Come hither. Three places are thine to choose: the first is beside me, the second over against me, and the third is where thou wilt."

Then Dobrynya seated himself opposite bold Alyosha and the young Princess Nastasya, and said to Vladimir:

"Fair Sun, grant me to pour out a cup of green wine, in measure a bucket and a half, in weight a pood and a half, and bear to whom I will."

"Thy song was great," said Prince Vladimir, "and the solace thereof was sweet. Pour the green wine without measure, take golden treasure without stint!"

So Dobrynya poured a great cup of wine, dropped therein his marriage ring, and gave to Nastasya.

"Drink to the bottom, young Princess Nastasya, and thou shalt see good; and if thou drink not to the bottom, thou shalt not see good."

Then Nastasya took the cup in one hand, and drained it at a draught, and lo! she beheld the ring with which she had wedded Dobrynya.

"Fair Sun Prince Vladimir," she said, "not he that sitteth beside me is my husband, but he that sitteth over against me, that little minstrel, young Dobrynya Nikitich."

Thereupon she rose to her nimble feet, put her little white hands upon the oaken board, and vaulted over, fell upon Dobrynya's white breast, and kissed his sugar mouth.

"The proverb saith—'A man goeth to the forest for wood, and his wife doth wed straightway!' Take thy silken whip, therefore, Dobrynya, and beat me."

But Dobrynya answered, "I marvel not at thee, woman; as 'tis said, 'a woman's hair is long, but her wits are short.' But at Prince Vladimir, the Fair Sun, I do marvel,—that he should woo the wife of a living husband for another man, and should compel her to wed when she would not willingly. And yet more do I marvel at my brother in arms, bold Alyosha Popovich. Yester-e'en was but a week that Alyosha saw me in the open plain; and now the younger brother hath taken away the elder brother's wife."

Then he seized Alyosha by the yellow curls, dragged him over the oaken table, hurled him upon the brick floor, and began to beat him with his little cudgel of ninety poods; and when he was done, he flung Alyosha under the wall-bench. Quoth he, "'Any man may marry,' saith the proverb, 'but not with every man doth it go well!'" Then the guests were all terrified and fled.

And Dobrynya took his young wife by her white hands, and led her to his palace of white stone. Thenceforward he rode upon no quest, but dwelt in Kief town; but Alyosha went, with shame and grief, to a strange and distant land.

And Dobrynya's fame, and the fame of that feast, have been sung since that day, and shall be so for ever, and for evermore.

Ilya of Murom and Tzar Kalin

AT courteous Prince Vladimir's palace in royal Kief town, an honourable feast was assembled of many princes, all the nobles, the mighty heroes and their bold body-guards, and all the merchant-traders.

The Fair Sun made good cheer; to one he gave cities, to another towns, to this man villages, to that one hamlets. And to Ilya he gave a cloak of marten skins, with a collar of sables. But the cloak came not into honour with Ilya, nor into praise. He bare that cloak of marten skins to the kitchen, dragged it about the brick floor by one sleeve, and began to say to it:

"I will drag about that serpent, Tzar Kalin, by his yellow curls, as I drag this cloak of marten skins. As I pour green wine upon this cloak, even so will I pour out his hot heart, with its seething blood."

But a black-visaged maid bore this saying to the Fair Sun Prince Vladimir. "Ilya hath been in my kitchen," she said; "he hath dragged his mantle of marten about, and hath said that even so he would also drag Vladimir by his yellow curls. And he hath poured green wine upon the mantle, and declared that even so he would pour out Prince Vladimir's burning heart with his own white hands."

Then was Prince Vladimir very wroth, and shouted in his thundering voice :

" Ye mighty heroes ! lead Ilya to our dungeon, and set an iron grating there; pile trunks of oak trees on all sides, and heap over all yellow sand."

The heroes went and told Ilya all, and besought him to help them in this strait, else would Prince Vladimir overwhelm them with his displeasure. So Ilya mounted his good steed, and rode willingly with them to the dungeon. There he dismounted from his good Cloudfall, took off the Cherkessian saddle and plaited bridle, and let his brown horse wander free at God's good will.

Then he descended into the dungeon, and the heroes made all fast as Prince Vladimir had commanded.

When the Princess Apraxia heard of that, she dug a deep passage, and carried sugar viands and mead to Ilya of Murom the old Kazák. There Ilya sat for the space of three years. And it came to the ears of the Dragon Tzar Kalin.

Then Kalin the Tzar assembled a great host from the Golden Horde, to ride against Kief town, to take the Princess Apraxia for his wife. Each of the forty Tzars and Tzareviches, the forty Kings and Princes, had a company of forty thousand men. They stood along swift-flowing Mother Dnyepr, and about Kief town on all sides, a hundred versts well told.

That dog Tzar Kalin seated himself on his folding chair and wrote in haste a cartel, with a swan-quill pen, and pure gold in place of ink, upon crimson velvet. Then he chose his best and favourite runner, gave him the cartel, and commanded him in these words :

" Go thou to Kief town; enter not by the white

oak gates, but leap the city wall; bind not thy horse, but enter straight the palace of white stone; open the door wide, but close it not again; do no reverence to Vladimir, neither take thou thy cap from thy head. But take thy stand over against him, fling this cartel upon the golden table, and say to Prince Vladimir: 'Take this cartel, and look what is written there. Clean all thine arrow-straight streets, remove the wondrous crosses from God's temples, and build horse-stalls in the churches; for our good steeds shall be stabled there. And clean out all thy palaces of white stone, for our host is great. And brew sweet intoxicating liquors; let cask stand upon cask in close array. For Kalin the Tzar and his great host shall stand in thy city of Kief; and he shall wed the Princess Apraxia.'"

All this was done as Kalin had commanded; and when Prince Vladimir had read the cartel he wrote a submissive letter in reply: "Thou hound and Tzar Kalin! Grant me a truce of three months to clean the streets and palaces, and to brew the sweet liquors."

And Kalin granted the truce.

Prince Vladimir began to pace to and fro with bitterness; he dropped burning tears from his clear eyes, and wiped them away with a silken kerchief, and said:

"Ilya of Murom the Old Kazák is no more; there is none to fight for our faith and fatherland, for the church of God and the city of Kief; there is none to defend Prince Vladimir."

Then spake the Princess: "Little father! command thy trusty servants to go to the deep dungeon and see whether Ilya be not yet alive."

"Thou foolish princess!" Vladimir made answer. "If I take thy turbulent head from thy

shoulders, will it grow again? How can the bold good youth be living after these three years?"

Nevertheless he went himself to the dungeon, and found Ilya with sweet viands, cushions of down, and warm coverlets, reading the Holy Gospel. He bowed to the earth before Ilya, and besought him to defend them all, not for his own sake, but for pity of the widows and orphans. Then he took the Old Kazák by his little white hands, by his golden ring, led him to his own table, and gave him to eat and drink of the best.

So Ilya saddled his good steed, and sallied forth. They saw the good youth as he mounted, they saw him not as he rode. There was but a smoke-wreath on the open plain, and springs of water burst forth where good Cloudfall's hoofs beat the earth. He leaped to the crest of a lofty mountain, and the Old Kazák gazed upon all sides, hoping to descry the absent Russian heroes.

In the east he espied white pavilions, for Alyosha Popovich was come to the oak Nevida, to the cross Levanidof, to the white stone Alatyr. He had pitched a snowy tent, shaken out fine wheat for his good steed, planted a staff of twenty fathoms, and on it hung a golden tassel,—not for beauty and splendour, but as a heroic signal, that the accursed Tatars might know that Alyosha Popovich stood on guard in the open plain.

From afar, very far, came also Dobrynya Nikitich to the oak, the cross, the stone, pitched his pavilion, and displayed two tassels; and so the other heroes did likewise. Then came Ilya, placed three golden tassels on his staff, flung the silken reins on his steed's neck that the good beast might gather up a little of the wheat, and entered the white pavilion, where twelve heroes of Holy Russia were sitting at meat.

All rose and kissed, and bade him welcome heartily. Then they sat down again to eat and drink, and Ilya announced his errand.

But his godfather, Samson Samoilovich, made answer: "Nay, my beloved godson! but we will not saddle our horses to defend Kief town, Vladimir, and his Princess. For lo! he hath many princely nobles, to whom he giveth meat and drink and guerdon, while we have nothing from Prince Vladimir."

"It will be the worse for thee," quoth Ilya; and so they wrangled.

Meanwhile Vladimir wrapped himself in his mantle furred with marten, and paced to and fro in Kief town. For the truce was nearly expired, and the heroes were not come. As he thus walked the streets, his nephew, young Yermak Timofeevich,[1] sprang forth from the royal pot-house, and entreated Vladimir that he might have a heroic steed, a coat of chain mail of ninety poods, and a mace of equal weight, so that he might ride against the hostile host.

"Thou art but a braggart child," quoth Vladimir, "and hast never taken a mace in thy hand."

"If thou grant not the horse, uncle, I will go on foot."

So Vladimir yielded, and bade Yermak choose what horse he would from the stable, where he should also find what armour he required. Thither went the youth in all haste; but the chain mail was so rusty, that he flung it down upon the brick floor, whereupon all the rust flew from it.

Then Yermak saddled a good horse, and rode to the barrier by the Nevida oak, and found the twelve heroes playing checkers upon a board of

[1] Yermak Timofeevich conquered Siberia during the reign of Ivan the Terrible.

gold, and Ilya asleep upon a couch of fishes' teeth, beneath a coverlet of sables.

Yermak was vexed, and shouted with all his strength: "Ho there, thou Old Kazák, Ilya Murometz! Yonder in Kief there is bread to eat in plenty, but no one to defend the town."

Then said the Old Kazák: "Climb into the damp oak, oak, young Yermak, and reckon yon host by the standards."

Yermak climbed the damp oak, viewed the vast host, and saw that it was sallying forth: damp mother earth trembled and bent under the weight thereof.

—The gray wolf could not skirt that force in a long spring day; the black raven could not fly about it in the longest day of summer, nor would the longest light of autumn suffice for the gray bird to fly over it.

Then Yermak leaped quickly from the damp oak, sprang upon his good steed, and rode straightway against that host. The heroes sat on in the white pavilion. Ilya slept three days and nights. During that space, young Yermak contended alone with the Tatars, pausing not to eat nor to drink, nor to let his good steed rest.

"Mount the damp oak, Dobrynya," spoke Ilya when he awoke. "Perchance young Yermak hath fallen thence."

From the tree-top Dobrynya beheld the vast host, and something more: not the black raven flying, not the bright falcon soaring, but that bold and goodly youth Yermak galloping against those infidels. This he told to Ilya.

"Rise, ye Russian heroes!" shouted the Old Kazák then. "Mount your good steeds, and sally forth against that host. And take iron grappling-hooks, catch them in young Yermak's shoulders,

and persuade him : ' Thou hast breakfasted to-day, now let us dine.' For the young lad will perish, and will never attain to herohood."

So Alyosha went forth with stout grappling-irons; but thrice did young Yermak break away from them, and Alyosha returned to the pavilion. And so it fared also with Dobrynya. Then Ilya went himself. He sat his charger like a century-old oak, wavering not, and caught hold of Yermak. "Calm thy heroic heart," he said, "we will labour now."

As the clear falcon swoopeth down upon the geese and swans, and small gray migratory ducks, so swooped the Holy Russian hero upon that Tatar horde, and began to trample the host under his horse's hoofs, and to lay them low, as a mower cutteth down the grass.

Then Cloudfall conjured him with human tongue : "Aï, thou mighty Russian hero ! Boldly hast thou attacked this vast host, but thou mayest not overcome it. For that hound Tzar Kalin hath many great heroes and bold warrior-maids; and moreover, he hath dug three great trenches in the open plain. If thou ride against that horde, we shall fall into those trenches. Out of the first I may leap and bear thee, and likewise out of the second. But out of the third I may not bear thee, and though I leap forth, thou wilt remain in the ditch. For I watched them dig the trenches whilst thou wert sleeping, and so watching had no time to eat my wheat."

This discourse pleased not the Old Kazák. He grasped his silken whip in his white hands, and beat the horse upon his flanks. "Thou treacherous hound ! " quoth he. "I feed and water thee, and yet thou wilt abandon me in the deep ditches of the open plain ! "

So he heeded not good Cloudfall's warning, but

rode on, destroying the host with his spear and his horse's hoofs; and his strength was not diminished.

When he fell into the first trench, his good steed bore him out in safety. Again he rode, and came to the second ditch; and from that also he escaped. From the third, heroic Cloudfall leaped nimbly (but bore not Ilya with him), and fled far afield.

Then the accursed Tatars fell upon the Old Kazák, fettered his nimble feet, bound his white hands, and led him to where Tzar Kalin sat in his linen pavilion.

"Aï, thou Old Kazák, Ilya of Murom!" quoth Tzar Kalin. "How should a young puppy prevail alone against my great host?"

And to his guards he said:

"Unbind Ilya's white hands, unfetter his nimble feet." And it was done.

"Now sit thou at one table with me, Ilya; eat my sweet viands, drink my mead, put on my flowered apparel. Marry my daughter, and serve not Prince Vladimir, but be vassal to me, the Tzar Kalin."

"Had I my sharp sword by me, thou dog, Kalin the Tzar, it should woo thy neck!" Ilya answered. "None of these things will I do. But I will uphold the temples of God, the Princess Apraxia and Prince Vladimir, and the city of Kief."

Then he heard a voice from heaven say, "Lift up thy hands, Ilya." So he lifted them, and smote off Tzar Kalin's turbulent head, and going forth from the pavilion, he began to destroy the Tatars; and none opposed him. But he perceived that the task was not small, and so seized a Tatar by the heels, and began to beat the Tatars with a Tatar. "This Tatar is stout," quoth Ilya, "he breaketh not; he is tough, and teareth not."

When he was come to the open plain, he flung the Tatar far from him, and blew a heroic blast on his aurochs horn; for his clear eyes were dimmed, his hot heart burned, and he could distinguish neither the white day nor the black night. His heroic steed heard that ringing blast, and galloped to his master from afar.

Then Ilya mounted him, and rode forthwith to a lofty mountain, and gazed to the eastward, where the heroic steeds stood beside the white pavilions. He lighted down from off his horse, fitted a fiery arrow to his stout bow, and conjured it: "Fly, little dart aflame, to yonder white pavilion! Tear off the roof, pierce the white breast of my brother in arms, make a small scratch—not large. For he sleepeth, and taketh his ease, while I stand here alone, and can do but little."

The shaft sped straight to the white breast of Samson Samoilovich, and roused that glorious hero of Holy Russia from his heavy sleep. When he opened his eyes, and beheld that the roof of his tent was gone, and a little dart had flown into his breast, he sprang quickly to his nimble feet.

"Ho there, my mighty heroes of Holy Russia!" he shouted. "Saddle now your good steeds in haste, and mount with speed. An unwelcome messenger is come from my brother in arms,—a little dart. Had it not been for the cross of six poods upon my breast, my turbulent head had been torn away."

Right quickly then did those Holy Russian heroes saddle their chargers, and ride towards Kief town, and Ilya went down from the lofty mountain to meet the twelve. And all thirteen heroes rode against the Tatar horde.

For five hours these good youths mowed down young and old, leaving not so much as a single

soul to continue the race. And when they were come together again in one place, they began to boast, and to say: "If there were a ladder to heaven, we would climb it, and destroy all the heavenly host!" Then they began again to slay the Tatars: when lo! two, yea even three, rose up in place of every man they killed.

Then those mighty Russian heroes began to turn their arms against each other, to pierce and hew each other, so that of all those Russian warriors there was left alive only young Yermak Timofeevich.[1]

When Yermak returned to Kief town, courteous Prince Vladimir inquired of him: "How shall I reward thee now, beloved nephew mine? Wilt thou have estates, or golden treasure?"

And young Yermak made answer: "Grant me only, uncle, that I may drink beer and wine without price in all the pot-houses." And so Vladimir granted it.

But Ilya of Murom, the Old Kazák of the Don, was caught away from those accursed Tatars, and with his good heroic Cloudfall was turned to stone. And the bones of the Old Kazák have become holy relics.[2]

And so the race of Russian heroes came to an end for ever.

[1] In a version of this bylina obtained in 1840 from an old Siberian Kazák, by Mey the poet, the heroes do not kill each other. They become frightened at the ever-increasing horde of enemies, and "flee to the mountains of stone, to the dusky caverns. And as each hero reaches the mountains, he turns to stone." As this part of the Siberian version is much decayed in form, it is doubtful whether it formed part of the poem in its original ancient shape.

A Little Russian legend declares that the last bogatyr was caught by the recruiting officer, and turned into a soldier.

[2] See Appendix: *Ilya of Murom.*

Tzar Solomon and Tzaritza Solomonida[1]

BEYOND the glorious blue sea, in Imperial Tzargrad,[2] Tzar Vasily Okulovich made a great and honourable feast to many princes, nobles, errant-knights, stout and mighty heroes, and all the bold warrior-maidens, Tatars, body-guards, and merchants from other lands.

The white day drew to even, the feast waxed merry, the sovereign was well diverted, and paced the banquet hall, shaking his yellow curls. He spoke:

"Oh, ye my princes, boyars, mighty heroes, damsels-errant, Tatars, and body-guard! All in Tzargrad are wedded, every maid and widow is given in marriage; and I, your prince, most fair Tzar Vasily Okulovich, alone go unwed. Know ye not, therefore, a spouse for me? Stately of form must she be, of equal understanding; her eyes like the falcon clear, her brows of the black sable, the sable of Siberia; gracious her speech must be, as of the white migratory swan, her face white as the snow, her cheeks like the poppy in hue, her gait like that of the golden-antlered stag, and in all this world must none be found her equal."

[1] See Appendix.

[2] Constantinople: literally, "Tzar's town."

—All at the feast fell silent. The great hid behind the lesser, and he, in turn, behind the small, and from that little Tatar, the Tzar had no reply. Then from a side table, from his seat of precious fishes' teeth, rose Tarakashko, a guest from over the sea, came very close to the Tzar, did him lowly reverence, and spoke with all softness:

"Bless, my liege, the word I shall utter! I have journeyed afar, beyond the blue sea; in the royal town of Jerusalem dwelleth the Tzaritza Solomonida. Such another have I never beheld upon this earth. She sitteth, lord, in a lofty castle; the red sun burneth her not, the frequent, drizzling rains wet her not, and good men scoff not at her."

Then answered Tzar Vasily: "Thou art foolish, Guest Tarakashko from over the sea! How may a wife be taken from a living husband?"

"I know, in sooth, how to take a wife with cunning and wisdom. Build me now three scarlet ships; fashion their prows like wild beasts, and their sides in the semblance of dragons. In place of eyes, set a whole fox of the cavern, in place of black brows a whole Siberian sable. Set a tree of cypress, and on it place birds of paradise that they may sing imperial songs. Prepare a couch of ivory, and at its head place, lord, a little gusly, which will sing, hum, breathe forth delicate tones of itself—all the airs of Tzargrad; that they may be a solace to Jerusalem, and may sing reason and understanding into the turbulent head—the turbulent head of a human being. Roll on board food, my liege lord, noble vodka,[1] and the drink that bringeth oblivion of all things. Give me skippers, lord, and work-people; so will I bring thee Solomonida, my liege."

[1] Brandy.

Then the Tzar did all as commanded, and Guest Tarakashko made ready and sailed out upon the blue sea, and drew near to the city of Jerusalem.

—Solomon went forth upon the open plain, and came to bid farewell to the Tzaritza Solomonida.

"Most fair Solomonida, I go now to the open plain," he said. And the Tzaritza made answer:

"Most wise Tzar Solomon Davidovich! Last night I slept but little, and beheld many things in my dreams. Methought, lord, that the golden ring upon thy right hand did melt, and the Novgorod setting rolled away, and was scattered about thee."

"Thou hast but slept, and had a dream," spoke Solomon.

"Nay, lord," the Tzaritza said: "I slept but little, and had many visions. Methought they bore thy white swan far away from thy green garden."

This Solomon could interpret. "Most fair Tzaritza Solomonida! yield not to manly charms." Then took he leave of her, and went forth upon the open plain to collect tribute for twelve years.

—Guest Tarakashko from beyond the sea entered the harbour, and paid a tax; he cast anchor, and paid dues, lowered his sails, and paid yet more.

Then he took noble and precious gifts, and came to the Tzaritza in her lofty castle, crossed himself as enjoined, did reverence as commanded, and spoke these words:

"Most fair Tzaritza Solomonida! Receive from my hand these honourable gifts, and give me scribes and surveyors, to write down the wares upon my vessels, that thou mayest take due tribute, and grant me leave to trade in Jerusalem."

So the Tzaritza appointed scribes and surveyors according to his desire, and Tarakashko led them to his first vessel, and gave them lordly

vodka; led them to the second, and brought them the liquor of oblivion. The scribes all drank, and lay about upon the ships.

Guest Tarakashko wept sore thereat, came to the Tzaritza and made complaint. "Most fair Tzaritza Solomonida! no scribes and surveyors hast thou given me, but pot-house sots. Methinks they cannot have tasted of green wine for an age, for they lie like Christian beasts about my decks."

Then the Tzaritza rose, and took a force of five hundred men, and went to the first vessel to view the matter. There Tarakashko brought lordly vodka, and on the second treated her to the wine of oblivion; and the Tzaritza drank too much. For Guest Tarakashko was crafty, and had made her, for his purpose, pass through these two first vessels as he led her to the third where stood the couch of ivory. The Tzaritza lay down upon the fair couch, the little harp sounded softly, the birds of heaven sang, and the Tzaritza fell asleep.

Guest Tarakashko beheld, and shouted in a hissing voice:

"Ho there, my skippers and sailors all! Hoist the linen sails, run far out upon the blue sea!"

When the Tzaritza wakened from her deep slumber, and all the skippers were hastening to and fro, hoisting the linen sails, and steering out to sea, she roused herself, and said:

"Guest Tarakashko from over the sea! if thou bearest me away for thyself, I will not go with thee!"

But Tarakashko was cunning, and knew right well how to shape his answer: "Not for myself do I bear thee, lady, but for Tzar Vasily Okulovich. And in sooth our faith is better than thine: Wednesdays and Fridays are like all other days

with us, and we eat meat." And this faith seemed good to the Tzaritza, and she resisted not.

Quickly they ran to Tzargrad, and cast anchor in the ship harbour. Tzar Vasily came to meet them, took Solomonida by her white hands, kissed her sugar mouth, and led her to the cathedral where they straightway took the golden crowns. Then they began to live and pass the time in mirth.

—Solomon returning from the open plain found not his Tzaritza. Then the most wise Tzar gathered a force of forty thousand men, all clad in chain mail, and marched around the blue sea to Tzargrad. When he came to a green grove, he halted, and left all his host beneath the trees, and commanded them:

"All ye, my well-beloved host! I go now alone to Tzargrad. If I be near to speedy death, I will blow one blast upon my aurochs horn: then saddle your good steeds in haste. If a second time I sound, then mount your good steeds quickly. If a third blast I blow, then ride, ride with what speed ye may, to the oaken gallows, and defend me from sudden death."

Then Solomon took leave of his men, and went alone to Tzargrad, on foot, and so came over against the royal palace, and shouted in a ringing voice:

"Most fair Tzaritza Solomonida! give alms to a wandering psalm-singer!"

The little lattice window was opened wide: no white swan it was which twittered, but the Tzaritza, who spoke these words: "I look—lo! 'tis no wandering psalm-singer I see—'tis Solomon the most wise Tzar. Prithee, Solomon, enter my lofty palace. That which I have done, lord, was against my will."

So Solomon entered the lofty palace, crossed himself as commanded, did reverence as enjoined,

bowing on all sides. Fair Solomonida seated him at the white oak table, gave him all manner of savoury viands and pleasant liquors, and showed him great honour.

But then came Tzar Vasily from the open plain, and knocked at the silver ring, and Solomon said: "Solomonida most fair! is there not some place where I may hide?"

"Creep into this iron-bound chest, Solomon."

She undid the double locks, and when Solomon had entered she made them fast again, admitted Tzar Vasily, and sitting upon the chest, spoke thus: "Most fair Vasily Okulovich! Solomon is reputed both wise and cunning. But of a truth, there is none more foolish; for lo! a woman now sitteth upon him!"

"Show me Solomon most wise, fairest Solomonida," quoth Vasily.

Then she undid the twofold locks, and besought Vasily: "Give speedy death to Solomon, fair Vasily! Cut off his turbulent head; for, of a truth, Solomon is both wise and crafty."

Solomon sprang to his nimble feet, seized Vasily by his white hands, and said: "With us 'tis not the usage to cut off the heads of Tzars. Make now, therefore, a lofty scaffold, and hang upon it three great nooses; the first of rope, the second of bast, the third of silk."

"Ho there, Tzar Vasily!" cried the Tzaritza then, "full time is it for thee to execute judgment upon Solomon, and sever his turbulent head, else will he yet escape by his craft and wisdom."

Nevertheless the Tzar did all as Solomon had commanded, and they all went forth to the gallows of white oak—Solomon the most wise Tzar, Solomonida the fairest Tzaritza, Tzar Vasily, and Guest Tarakashko from over the sea.

When they were come to the gallows, Solomon spoke this word: "Tzar Vasily Okulovich! the horse draweth the forward wheels; why, then, should the devil bear the hind wheels?" But no one could read that riddle.

Then Solomon mounted the first step, and said: "Most fair Tzar Vasily Okulovich! in my youth and childhood I fed the peasant flock. Grant me now, lord, to blow my aurochs horn once more."

"Blow, Solomon, as much as thou wilt," said Vasily.

But Solomonida urged speedy death. "He is in my hands now," quoth Vasily. Solomon blew the first blast upon his horn, and all his force was tossed about. Right quickly did they saddle their good steeds, while Tzar Vasily feared and was disquieted.

"What marvel is this that hath been wrought, Solomon?" he asked. "On the open plain there is stamping, and clinking of metal."

"Fear not, Tzar Vasily," Solomon made answer, "and be not disquieted. My horses in Jerusalem have fled from their stalls to the gloomy forest, and would fain recall Solomon most wise."

Then he mounted the second step. With Vasily's good leave, and against the will of Solomonida, he blew a second blast upon his horn. All his host was thrilled to motion, as his men mounted their good steeds in haste. And Vasily trembled thereat, and was afraid.

"What wonder hath been wrought in the plain, Solomon? For there is a clanging and a beating of hoofs."

"Fear thou nothing, Tzar Vasily! My bird in Jerusalem hath flown from the garden to the dusky grove, and beateth the grove with its wings, recalling Solomon most wise."

Then he mounted the third step, and craved leave to sound his horn for the last time. He blew a battle call, and all his great host was moved, as though clear falcons had flown overhead, or gray wolves had sped swiftly past. With all speed they rode to the oaken gallows, and took Tzar Solomon most wise therefrom. Then they sat Tzar Vasily in the silken noose, Tzaritza Solomonida the Fair in the rope, and Guest Tarakashko in the noose of bast. And having taken captive all Tzargrad, they journeyed back around the blue sea to Jerusalem, and began again to live and to pass their days in pleasure.

THE CYCLE OF NOVGOROD

(1. VASILY BUSLAEVICH. 2. SADKO)

Vasily Buslaevich, the Brave of Novgorod

IN glorious Novgorod the Great, dwelt old Buslai for the space of ninety years. He dwelt in peace with Novgorod, challenging it not, and had no dispute with the men thereof. At length he died, being full of years, and left great possessions, a widow, and an amiable son, young Vasiliushka Buslaevich,[1] the child of his old age.

When Vasiliushka had attained to seven years, his mother sent him to learn to read and write. In this he succeeded well, likewise in church singing: in all Novgorod the Glorious there was no singer equal to him. Then he began to roam the city, to loiter in princely courts, to consort with foolish fellows and many pot-house sots, and to jest in rude fashion with noble and princely children. When he plucked at a hand, it was torn away from the shoulder; each foot he pulled dropped off with the leg attached; heads at his touch spun round like buttons; when he knocked two or three children together, they lay as dead.

Then came people from the Princes of Novgorod to the very honourable widow, to make complaint of her son; and they besought her to put a stop to his crippling the children. Thereupon she reprimanded and upbraided Vasily, weeping bitterly the while:

[1] See Appendix.

"My sweet child," she said, "why goest thou about Novgorod making cripples? At thy age thy father had not a hundred roubles in his pocket, but he had a brave body-guard.—But thou hast neither brother nor brave guards, and thou wilt never be able to settle matters with any one."

Vasily liked not this word, and ascended to his lofty tower. There he sat himself down in his folding-chair, and wrote many a scroll with speed, and wisely were the words ordered therein: "Whoso will eat savoury viands all ready to hand, drink green wine without price, and wear flowered raiment of divers hues, let him repair to Vaska's court."

Then he bound these scrolls to stout arrows, and shot them into Novgorod. As the men of Novgorod came from church, they gathered them up in the streets and lanes; and some who could read chancing there, they looked upon the scrolls, and interpreted them: "Vasily commandeth us to an honourable feast."

Young Vasily Buslaevich made ready for his guests. He rolled a cask of green wine of forty buckets from his vaults, and set it in the midst of his court, and took to himself a cudgel of red elm.

"Whosoever shall lift in one hand a cup of this wine, in weight a pood and a half, and shall quaff it at a breath, and shall likewise withstand a blow from my red elm upon his turbulent head, he shall make one of my brave body-guard," quoth Vasily.

That night he slept in his lofty tower, on a bed of down laid upon a little couch of smoothed planks.

The next morning, very early, the honourable widow Avdotya Vasilievna paced her palace, and looked out upon her spacious courtyard; and lo!

it was black with the assembled host. In haste she went to her dear son, and said:

"Thou sleepest, Vasiliushka, and takest thine ease, and knowest not the evil that standeth even now at thy gates. Lo! a force black as the raven is in thy court."

Vasily, when he heard that, sprang quickly to his nimble feet, grasped his red elm in his white hands, and went forth into the spacious court.

"Aï, Vasiliushka Buslaevich!" cried the men of Novgorod, "we stand now within thy court, and are minded to devour all thy viands, drink up all thy liquors, wear out all thy flowered garments, and drag forth thy golden treasure."

But this discourse pleased not Vasily. He leaped forth into the court, grasped his red elm more firmly, and began to brandish it. Where he swung it a lane appeared, where he drew it back, an alley; and he slew the men of Novgorod like a thunderstorm, so that they lay dead in heaps. And Vasily returned again to his lofty, golden-crowned tower.

Then came Kostya[1] New-trader, took a cup of green wine, raised it with one hand, drained it at a single draught. Thereupon Vasily sprang forth from the new hall, grasping his red elm, and smote Kostya a deadly blow; but the child stood firm and moved not, the black curls on his turbulent head waved not, the full cup in his hand was not spilled.

"Is my strength less than of old?" quoth Vasily: "doth not my red elm serve me as of yore?"

And lo! a little stone lay there, white and burning: on this he essayed his strength—and the stone was shivered to atoms.

[1] *Kostya*, diminutive of *Konstantine*.

"Aï, Kostya New-trader!" he cried, "be thou of my brave body-guard, and enter now my palace of white stone."

Then came Lame Potanyshka, lifted the great cup in one hand, drained off the green wine at a breath, and when he had withstood Vasily's stern assault he likewise became one of the body-guard; and in like manner also, Komushka the Hunchback.

These three went not forth from the new hall.

"Enter now my palace of white stone," quoth Vasily. "There we will quaff sweet liquors, and eat sugar viands; and there is none in Novgorod whom we must fear."

Thus did Vasily choose his brave body-guard, and chose these three, no more.

After that, Vasily made an honourable feast for the men of Novgorod. But when they came to it, he gave meat and drink to his guards, and gave neither meat, drink, nor honour to the men of Novgorod.

So when the men of Novgorod perceived that things were not well with them they said: "Cursed be thou, Vasily Buslaevich! We have come at thy bidding, yet have neither fared sumptuously, nor worn fine apparel. Therefore is eternal strife engendered." Then they took counsel together, and said:

"Children! let us turn Vasiliushka into a laughing-stock: let us make an honourable feast for Vasily, and let us not bid him to it—this miserable little Vasily!"

So they made their feast. And when Vasily heard of it, he said: "My lady mother, I shall go to that feast."

Avdotya Vasilievna, that honourable widow, would have dissuaded him. "My dear child,"

she spoke, "there is room for the guest who is bidden, but not for him who is unbidden."

Nevertheless Vasily hearkened not to his mother's counsel. He took his brave body-guard, and went to the feast. He asked no leave of the gate-keepers, nor yet of the lackeys at the doors, but entered straight the banquet hall. He set his right foot in the hall, his left on the oaken table in the great corner, and flung himself on the wall-bench in the corner by the oven, stretching out his right hand and his right foot.

The guests all came to the oven-corner; and Vasily moved to the corner by the door, and stretched out his left hand and left foot. Thereupon the guests went to the new hall, and some fled to their homes in terror.

Then Vasily went to the oaken tables with his body-guard, and all the guests assembled again, and said: "Though thou hast taken thy seat in the great corner, Vasily Buslaevich, yet art thou an unbidden guest, while we are bidden."

Thereto Vasily made answer: "Though I be an unbidden guest, where I am placed, there will I sit; and what cometh under my hand, that will I eat and drink."

The red sun declined to even, the feast waxed mirthful; all the guests grew drunken and merry, and began to make great brags. Thereupon Vasily, with drunken and stupid mind, laid a great wager, even his turbulent head, that he would go on the morrow to the bridge over the Volkof, and there, with the sole aid of his good guard, hold his own against all Novgorod.

When he left the feast, and returned home to his princely palace with drooping head, and eyes fixed on the ground, his mother inquired the cause of his sadness.

"Did they pass thee with the cup, or did some drunken churl jeer at thee?"

Vasily could make no reply, but his brave body-guard told her all. Then Avdotya Vasilievna put her shoes in haste upon her bare feet, cast her mantle of sables upon one shoulder, took her golden keys, and went to her deep vaults. There she heaped a bowl with red gold, another with pure silver, and yet a third with fair round pearls, and came to the honourable feast. She crossed herself as prescribed, did reverence in courteous wise, and said:

"Hail, ye men of Novgorod! Forgive now Vasily his fault."

But they refused to accept her gifts, or to pardon Vasily. "If the Lord help us to take Vasily, we will ride his good steeds, wear his flowered garments, and squander his golden treasure. We will pardon him when we shall have cut off his head!"

Then Avdotya Vasilievna went home in grief and sadness, scattering the red gold, pure silver, and fair round pearls over the open plain, saying: "Not this is dear to me, but the turbulent head of my beloved son, young Vasily Buslaevich!"

So when she was come to her own dwelling, she gave Vasily to drink of the cup of forgetfulness, led him to a deep dungeon, and locked him securely therein. Then she loosed his good steed in the open plain, and hid his red-elm cudgel of forty poods, his sharp sword, and heroic garments.

Early the next morning, Vasily's brave troop took their stand by the Volkof river, and began to contend with the men of Novgorod.

All that day they fought without eating; a second day and night they fought without drinking, and yet a third day without pausing to rest.

In the meanwhile Vasily slept, and took his ease, knowing naught of the evil that was come upon them. But a brave, black-visaged hand-maiden, who went with her oaken buckets and her maple yoke to the stream for fresh water, beheld the evil case of the bold youths. She seized her yoke, and began to brandish it, and slew four hundred men therewith. Then she ran very quickly, and came to the dungeon, and cried:

"Sleepest thou, Vasily, and wilt not waken? Upon yon Volkof bridge thy brave guards stand up to their knees in blood, and captive, their heads broken with whips, their hands bound with their girdles."

Thereupon Vasily entreated the black-visaged maid: "Release me from this dungeon, and I will give thee golden treasure as much as thou desirest."

So she undid the door, breaking the lock with her maple yoke, and let Vasily out into the white world. And since he could not find his warlike harness, his mace and sharp spear, he wrenched the iron axle from a cart which stood near by (its length was two fathoms, and its weight forty poods), —threw it over his heroic shoulder, and said:

"I thank thee, damsel, that thou didst not let my brave body-guard perish. I will reckon with thee hereafter, but now I must not tarry," and therewith departed.

When he came to the Volkof bridge, and found all as the maiden had told him, he shouted:

"Aï, my brave body-guard! Ye have breakfasted, now let me dine. 'Twas not I, brothers, who betrayed ye, but my own mother. Go now, my well-beloved brothers, and rest, while I play with these children."

Then he began to stride about upon the bridge, brandishing his axle, and the men of Novgorod fell

in heaps before him. The princes perceived that their pitiless inevitable fate was come upon them, and that Vasily would leave no man alive of all Novgorod, and so went with the Voevoda and the Elder to his lady mother, and spoke this word:

"Aï, thou honourable widow, Avdotya Vasilievna! Curb thy dear child, young Vasily Buslaevich; soften his heroic heart, that he may leave but a handful of our men alive." But she replied:

"I dare not, ye princes of Novgorod. I have done him grievous wrong, in that I confined him in a deep dungeon. But my dear child hath a godfather, the Ancient Pilgrim, who dwelleth in the Sergyei monastery. He hath great power; ask him."

So the princes went to the Ancient Pilgrim, and told him all; and he sorrowed greatly, but made ready to go. He leaped into the lofty belfry, tore down the great bell of St. Sophia, in weight three thousand poods, and set it on his head, as a good cap. When he set out for the Volkof bridge, he leaned upon the clapper for a staff, and the bridge bent beneath him as he went.

Straight up to Vasily's clear eyes he strode, and spoke: "My godchild! Restrain thy heroic heart; spare at least a remnant of these men."

But Vasily's heroic heart grew hot at this speech.

"Aï, my godfather!" quoth he. "If I gave thee no egg at Easter-tide, yet take thou this red one now at Peter's day. Christ is risen!" [1]

Thereupon he smote the Ancient Pilgrim upon the great bell of Sophia, with his axle; and after that one blow, the Pilgrim's praise was sung.[2]

[1] The Easter greeting in Russia. [2] He was dead.

But Vasily seized the great clapper, and continued to slay the men of Novgorod. At length the princes prevailed upon his mother to make intercession for them. So she arrayed herself in a robe of black, threw a cloak of sables about her shoulders, set a helmet on her turbulent head, and went to her dear child. The old woman was wise, and approached him not from before, but crept up behind him, fell upon his mighty shoulders, and entreated him. Vasily dropped his arms, the axle fell from his hands to damp mother earth, and he said:

"Fair lady mother! thou art a cunning old woman and a wise! Thou hast known how to break my great power, by coming upon me from behind; for if thou hadst approached me from before, I should not have spared thee, my lady mother, but should have slain thee in the stead of a man of Novgorod."

Then came the Princes, the Voevoda, and the Elders of Novgorod, and fell at Vasily's feet, and prayed him to be their guest.

And they besought him also to gather up the bodies of the slain, and give them to damp mother earth; for the waters of the Volkof ran blood for a full verst.

Vasily gave command that all this should be done, and went to the banquet, but felt ill at ease there, and so returned to his palace of white stone, to his lady mother, and his brave body-guard.

There he lived at ease, healing the wounds of his good guards, and restoring them to their strength of former days.

By glorious Novgorod the Great, and on famous Ilmen Lake, swam and floated a gray drake, and dived like a fearless duck :—there floated the red ship of young Vasily Buslaevich, and thereon Vasily and his brave troop. Kostya held the helm, little Potanyshka stood on the prow, and Vasily paced the vessel, uttering these words : " My bright body-guard and brave, all my good youths and bold ! Set our vessel against Ilmen, and sail to Novgorod."

With anchors they caught the shore, threw out gangways to the bank, and Vasily went to his lordly court, followed by his brave troop, leaving but a watch behind.

When he came to his lady mother, he wound about her like a convolvulus vine, and besought her great blessing to go to Jerusalem town with his band; there to pray the Lord, to worship at the holy of holies, to visit the grave of the Lord, and bathe in the Jordan river.

" Aï, my dear child," his mother made answer, " if thou goest for a good purpose, I will give thee my great blessing, but if thou goest to rob, I will not give it; and may the damp earth not bear Vasily ! "

Stone softeneth in the fire, steel melteth in the glow, her mother's heart gave way : she gave Vasily stores of bread, and far-reaching weapons.

" Defend thy turbulent head, Vasily ! " she said.

Then in haste he assembled his good youths, and when they had taken leave of his widowed mother, they embarked on their scarlet vessel, raised the delicate linen sails, and ran out upon Lake Ilmen.

They had sailed a second day, and e'en a second week, when there came to meet them mariner guests.

"Hail, Vasily Buslaevich!" they said. "Whither, O youth, art thou pleased to journey?"

"I journey, O mariners," Vasily made answer, "an unwilling way. In my youth I killed and stole much: in my old age I must save my soul. Inform me, good youths, the straight way to the holy city of Jerusalem."

Then they told him that the straight way demanded a seven-weeks' journey, and the way about, a year and a half. But upon the glorious Caspian Sea was a stout barrier; for the chieftains of the Kazáks, three thousand in number, made their lair on the Island of Kuminsk, robbing barks and galleons, destroying scarlet ships.

"I believe neither dream nor vision," quoth Vasily; "I trust in my red elm alone: haste now, my children, by the straight way!"

When Vasily espied a lofty mountain, he ran quickly in to the steep shores, and ascended that Sorochinsky[1] hill, and after him flew his brave troop.

At mid-ascent, an empty human skull lay in the road, and human bones; Vasily spurned them from the path, whereupon the skull addressed him: "Hey, Vasily Buslaevich! Why dost thou cast me aside? I was no worse than thou, O youth! And I know how to defend myself. On this Sorochinsky mountain, where lieth this empty skull of a youth, shall lie likewise the head of Vasily."

Vasily spat and passed on. "Either the Enemy speaketh in thee, thou skull, or an unclean spirit!" he said, and proceeded up the mountain. On the very peak thereof stood a stone, three full fathoms broad; across it only an axe might be hurled: its

[1] Saracen.

length was three arshins [1] and a quarter; and on it was written this inscription, "He who shall solace himself at this stone, and divert himself by leaping along this stone, shall break his turbulent head."

This Vasily believed not, and began to divert himself with his brave guards, by leaping across the stone. Nevertheless, lengthwise they did not dare to leap.

At length they descended from the Sorochinsky mountains, embarked again upon their scarlet ships, spread their sails of fine linen, and ran across the Caspian Sea to that barrier to shipping where the robber Kazáks with their aged chieftains held their stand. At the landing stood a hundred men; nevertheless, young Vasily approached, cast out landing-stages upon the steep shore, and sprang to land, leaning upon his red elm.

Then all the bold and goodly youths, the guard, were terrified, and did not long await his coming, but fled to the chieftains of the Kazáks.

The atamans sat, marvelling not, and said:

"We have defended this isle these thirty years past, and have beheld no great terror. 'Tis young Vasily Buslaevich who cometh with falcon flight, and youthful daring."

Vasily and his band strode up to the Kazák chiefs, and stood in a single ring. Then Vasily bowed low, and spake this word: "Hail, ye Kazák chieftains! Tell me now the straight road to the holy city of Jerusalem."

Said the atamans: "Ho, Vasily Buslaevich! We pray thee to eat bread with us at one table."

And Vasily refused not, but sat with them at one table.

When they poured out green wine, he grasped

[1] An arshin is equal to twenty-eight inches.

the cup in one hand, and emptied it at a single draught:—and the measure of the cup was a bucket and a half. Thereat the chieftains marvelled greatly, for they could not drink so much as half a bucket. And when they had broken bread, Vasily betook himself once more to his scarlet ships; and the chieftains gave him gifts—a bowl of red gold, a bowl of pure silver, and a third bowl of fair round pearls. For these Vasily returned thanks, and did them reverence, craving a guide to Jerusalem. This they refused not, but having given him a young guide they took their leave of him.

Then Vasily and his brave troop hoisted their sails of fine linen, and ran out upon the Caspian Sea. When they came to Jordan river, they threw out strong anchors, and landing-stages upon the precipitous banks; and Vasily and his bold youths entered Jerusalem town.

He came to the cathedral church, served a mass for his mother's health, and for himself, and a mass with service for the soul of his father and all his family. On the next day was celebrated a service with prayers for the bold good youths, who from their young years up had slain and stolen much. Vasily prayed before the holy of holies, bathed in Jordan, reckoned with the popes and deacons, gave gold without stint to the aged people who depended on the church, and embarked again with his band on his scarlet ships.

Then the guards bathed in Jordan river, and an aged crone came to them, and said:

"Wherefore bathe ye naked in Jordan? None must bathe naked therein save only Vasily Buslaevich! For Jesus Christ the Lord himself bathed in Jordan river. And ye shall lose your great chieftain, Vasily Buslaevich."

"Our Vasily will not believe that, either in dream or vision," said they.

A little space thereafter, Vasily came to his men, and gave order that the ships should be sent out of the mouth of the Jordan river.

So they sailed across the Caspian Sea, and came to the Island of Kuminsk where he bowed before the Kazák captains. With them he talked not much, when they inquired if he had journeyed in safety to Jerusalem; but gave into their hands a writing which laid many labours upon them, and held a service with prayers for the youths. Then those Kazák chieftains bade Vasily to eat with them; but he consented not, and taking leave of them shortly, set out upon the Caspian for Novgorod.

When they had sailed a week, and yet a second, Vasily espied the Sorochinsky mountain, and was fain to view it once again. So they ran up to it, threw out their landing-stages, and began to ascend.

On the summit lay the stone with its inscription, which Vasily believed not. And after he had made merry and diverted himself with his body-guard, leaping across the stone, he was minded to essay a leap lengthwise. He leaped but a quarter way, and falling, was killed upon the stone. And where the empty skull had lain, there they buried Vasily.

Then his good body-guard sailed home to Novgorod, and coming to his mother, the honourable widow, they did homage, and laid a letter in her hand. When she had read it, she wept, and said: "Aï, ye bold and goodly youths! There is nothing now which I may do for you. Yet go ye into my deep vaults, and take golden treasure without stint."

So the black-visaged handmaiden led them thither, and when they had taken a little gold they came and gave thanks to Avdotya Vasilievna for her hospitality, in that she had fed, clothed, and shod the good youths. Then she commanded that a cup of green wine should be given to each, and when they had drunk it, they bowed low before her.

And after that, the good youths went their way, each youth wheresoever he listed.

Merchant Sadko the Rich Guest of Novgorod

IN the glorious city of Novgorod dwelt Sadko[1] the gusly-player. No golden treasures did he possess; he went about to the magnificent feasts of the merchants and nobles, and made all merry with his playing.

And it chanced on a certain day, that Sadko was bidden to no worshipful feast; neither on the second day nor the third was he bidden. Then he sorrowed greatly, and went to Lake Ilmen, and seated himself upon a blue stone. There he began to play upon his harp of maple-wood, and played all day, from early morn till far into the night.

The waves rose in the lake, the water was clouded with sand, and Sadko feared to sit there: great terror overcame him, and he returned to Novgorod.

The dark night passed, a second day dawned, and again Sadko was bidden to no worshipful feast. Again he played all day beside the lake, and returned in terror at nightfall.

And the third day, being still unbidden of any man, he sat on the blue burning stone, and played upon his harp of maple-wood, and the waves rose in the lake, and the water was troubled with sand.

But Sadko summoned up his courage, and ceased

[1] See Appendix.

not his playing. Then the Tzar Vodyanoi[1] emerged from the lake, and spake these words:

"We thank thee, Sadko of Novgorod! Thou hast diverted us of the lake. I held a banquet and a worshipful feast; and all my beloved guests hast thou rejoiced. And I know not, Sadko, how I may reward thee. Yet return now, Sadko, to thy Novgorod, and to-morrow they shall call thee to a rich feast. Many merchants of Novgorod shall be there, and they shall eat and drink, and wax boastful. One shall boast of his good horse, another of his deeds of youthful prowess; another shall take pride in his youth. But the wise man will boast of his aged father, his old mother, and the senseless fool of his young wife. And do thou, Sadko, boast also: 'I know what there is in Lake Ilmen—of a truth, fishes with golden fins.' Then shall they contend with thee, that there are no fish of that sort,—of gold. But do thou then lay a great wager with them; wager thy turbulent head, and demand from them their shops in the bazaar, with all their precious wares. Then weave thou a net of silk, and come cast it in Lake Ilmen. Three times must thou cast it in the lake, and at each cast I will give a fish, yea, a fish with fins of gold. So shalt thou receive those shops in the bazaar, with their precious wares. So shalt thou become Sadko the Merchant of Novgorod, the rich Guest."

Then Sadko returned again to Novgorod. And the next day he was bidden to a worshipful feast of rich merchants, who ate and drank, and boasted, one of this thing, and the other of that thing. And as the rich merchants of Novgorod sat there, they spoke thus to Sadko:

"Why sittest thou, Sadko, and boastest not

[1] The Water-King.

thyself? Hast thou nothing, Sadko, whereof to boast?"

Sadko spoke: "Hey, ye merchants of Novgorod! What have I, Sadko, that I may boast of? No countless treasures of gold are mine, no fair young wife; there is but one thing of which I may boast; in Ilmen Lake are fishes with fins of gold."

Then began the rich merchants to contend with him; and Sadko said: "I stake my turbulent head upon it, and more than that I have not to wager."

Said they: "We will stake our shops in the bazaar, with their precious wares—the shops of six rich merchants."

Thereupon they wove a net of silk, and went to cast it in Lake Ilmen. At the first cast in Ilmen. they took a little fish with fins of gold, and likewise with the second and the third cast.

Then the rich merchants of Novgorod saw that there was nothing to be done, for it had happened as Sadko had foretold; and they opened to him their shops in the bazaar, with all their precious wares. And Sadko, when he had received the six shops, and their rich goods, inscribed himself among the merchants of Novgorod; he became exceeding rich, and began to trade in his own city, and in all places, even in distant towns, and received great profit.

Sadko the rich merchant of Novgorod married, and built himself a palace of white stone, wherein all things were heavenly. In the sky, the red sun burned, and in his palace likewise a fair red sun; and when shone the lesser light, the moon, in heaven, in his palace it shone also; and when the thick-sown stars glittered in the sky, stars thickly sown gleamed within his towers. And Sadko adorned his palace of white stone in all ways.

After this was done, lo! Sadko made a banquet and a worshipful feast, and called to it all the rich merchants, the lords and the rulers of Novgorod, and the rulers were Luka Zinovief and Foma Nazarief. As they sat and feasted, after they had well eaten and drunken, they began to boast,—one of his good steed, one of his heroic might, another of his youth; the wise of his aged parents, the foolish of his young wife. But Sadko, as he walked about his palace, cried out: "Ho there, ye rich merchants, ye lords, rulers, and men of Novgorod! ye have eaten and drunk at my feast, and made your boasts. And of what shall I vaunt myself? My treasures of gold are now inexhaustible, my flowered garments I cannot wear out, and my brave body-guard is incorruptible. But I will boast of my golden treasure. With that treasure will I buy all the wares in Novgorod, both good and bad, and there shall be none for sale any more in all the city."

Then sprang the rulers, Foma and Luka, to their nimble feet, and said: "Is it much that thou wilt wager with us?" And Sadko answered: "What ye will of my countless treasure of gold, that will I wager." Then said the rulers, for the men of Novgorod: "Thirty thousand, Sadko, shall be thy stake against us." So it was agreed, and all departed from the feast.

The next morning, right early, Sadko rose, and waked his brave body-guard, and gave them all they would of his treasure, and sent them to the marts. But he himself went straight to the bazaar, and bought all the wares of Novgorod, both good and bad. And again, the next morning he rose, and waked his troop, and giving them great treasure, went to the bazaar; and finding wares yet more than before, he bought all, of

whatever sort. And on the third day, when he came to the market, he found, to the great glory of Novgorod, that vast store of goods had hastened thither from Moscow, so that the shops were full to overflowing with the precious stuffs of Moscow.

Then Sadko fell into thought: "If I buy all these goods from Moscow, others will flow hither from beyond the sea; and I am not able to buy all the wares of the whole white world. Sadko the merchant is rich, but glorious Novgorod is still richer! It is better to yield my great wager, my thirty thousand."

Thus he yielded the thirty thousand, and built thirty great ships, thirty dark-red ships and three. Their prows were in the likeness of wild beasts, their sides like dragons; their masts of red wood, the cordage of silk, the sails of linen, and the anchors of steel. Instead of eyes were precious jacinths; instead of brows, Siberian sables; and dark brown Siberian fox-skins in place of ears. His faithful guards, his clerks, loaded these red ships with the wares of Novgorod, and he sailed away down the Volkof to Lake Ladoga, and thence into the Neva, and through that river to the blue sea, directing his course towards the Golden Horde. There he sold his wares, receiving great gain, and filling many casks of forty buckets, with red gold, pure silver, and fair round pearls. They sailed away from the Golden Horde, Sadko leading the way in the Falcon ship, the finest of all the vessels. But on the blue sea the red ships halted; the waves dashed, the breeze whistled, the sails flapped, the ships strained,—but could not move from that spot.

Then Sadko the merchant, the rich Guest, shouted from his good Falcon ship: "Ho there, friends, ship-men, lower ye iron plummets, sound

the blue sea, whether there be any reefs or rocks or sand-bars here!" So they sounded, but found nothing.

And Sadko the merchant spake to his men: "Ho there, my brave body-guard! Long have we sailed the seas, yea, twelve full years, yet have we paid no tribute to the Tzar Morskoi,[1] and now he commandeth us down into the blue sea. Therefore, cast ye into the waves a cask of red gold." And they did so; but the waves beat, the sails tore, the ships strained, yet moved not.

Again spake Sadko the rich Guest: "Lo, this is but a small gift for the Tzar Morskoi, in his blue sea. Cast ye another cask, a cask of pure silver, to him." Yet the dark-red ships moved not, though they cast in also a cask of seed-pearls.

Then spake Sadko once again: "My brave, beloved body-guard, 'tis plain the Tzar Morskoi calleth a living man from among us into his blue sea. Make ye therefore lots of alder-wood, and let each man write his name upon his own, and the lots of all just souls shall float. But that man of us whose lot sinketh, he also shall go from among us into the blue sea." So it was done as he commanded:—but Sadko's lot was a cluster of hop-flowers. And all the lots swam like ducks save Sadko's, and that went to the bottom like a stone.

Again spoke Sadko the rich merchant to his troop: "These lots are not fair. Make ye to yourselves others of willow-wood, and set your names thereon, every man." This they did; but Sadko made his lot of blue damascened steel from beyond the sea, in weight ten poods. And it sank while all the others swam lightly on the blue sea.

After that he essayed divers woods, choosing ever for himself the lighter when his men's heavy

[1] Sea-King.

lots swam, and the heavier when his light lot fell to the depths. Nevertheless, his lot would by no means float, and the others would not sink.

Then said Sadko the rich Guest: "'Tis plain that Sadko can do nothing. The Tzar Morskoi demandeth Sadko himself in the blue sea. Then ho! my brave, beloved guards! fetch me my massive inkstand, my swan-quill pen, and my paper."

His brave, beloved men brought him his inkstand, pen, and paper; and Sadko, the rich merchant of Novgorod, sat in his folding-chair, at his oaken table, and began to write away his possessions. Much gave he to God's churches, much to the poor brethren, and to his young wife. And the remainder of his possessions he bestowed upon his brave body-guard.

After that he wept, and spake to his men:

"Aï, my men, well loved and brave! Place ye an oaken plank upon the blue sea, that I, Sadko, may throw myself upon the plank; so shall it not be terrible to me to take my death upon the blue sea. And fill ye, brothers, a bowl with pure silver, another with red gold, and yet a third with seed-pearls, and place them upon the plank."

Then took he in his right hand an image of St. Mikola, and in his left his little harp of maple-wood, with its fine strings of gold, and put on him a rich cloak of sables; and bitterly he wept as he bade farewell to his brave company, to the white world, and Novgorod the glorious. He descended upon the oaken plank, and was borne upon the blue sea, and his dark-red ships sped on and flew as they had been black ravens.

Then was Sadko the rich merchant of Novgorod greatly terrified, as he floated over the blue sea on his plank of oak; but he fell asleep, and lo! when he awoke it was at the very bottom of the ocean-

sea. He beheld the red sun burning through the clear waves, and saw that he was standing beside a palace of white stone where sat the Tzar Morskoi, with head like a heap of hay, on his royal throne.

The Tzar Morskoi spake these words: "Thou art welcome, Sadko, thou rich merchant of Novgorod! Long hast thou sailed the seas, yet offered no tribute to the Lord of the sea. And now thou art come as a gift to me. I have sent for thee that thou mayest answer me, which is now of greater worth in Russia: gold or silver or damascened steel. For the Tzaritza contendeth with us on this matter."

"Gold and silver are precious in Russia," Sadko made answer; "but damascened steel no less. For without gold or silver a man may well live; but without steel or iron can no man live."

"What hast thou there in thy right hand, and what in thy left?"

"In my right hand is an ikóna [1] of St. Mikola; in my left, my gusly."

"It is said that thou art a master-player on the harp," said the Tzar Morskoi then; "play for me upon thy harp of maple-wood."

Sadko saw that in the blue sea he could do naught but obey, and he began to pluck his harp. And as he played, the Tzar Morskoi began to jump about, beating time with the skirts of his garment, and waving his mantle; fair sea-maidens led choral dances, and the lesser sea-folk squatted and leaped.

Then the blue sea was churned with yellow sands, great billows surged over it, breaking many ships asunder, drowning many men, and engulfing vast possessions.

Three hours did Sadko play; and the Tzaritza said to him:

[1] Holy image.

"Break thy harp of maple-wood, merchant Sadko the rich Guest! It seemeth to thee that the Tzar is dancing in his palace, but 'tis on the shore he danceth, and many drown and perish, all innocent men."

Then Sadko brake his harp, and snapped its golden strings; and when the Tzar Morskoi commanded him to play yet two hours, he answered him boldly that the harp was broken; and when the Tzar would have had his smiths to mend it, Sadko said that could only be done in Holy Russia.

"Wilt thou not take a wife here?" the Tzar Morskoi said; "wilt thou not wed some fair maid in the blue sea?"

And Sadko answered: "In the blue sea, I obey thy will."

Then the Tzaritza said to him: "Choose not, merchant Sadko the rich Guest, any maid from the first three hundred which the Tzar shall offer thee, but let them pass; and the same with the second three hundred; and from the third, choose thou the Princess who shall come last of all: she is smaller and blacker than all the rest. And look to it that thou kiss not, embrace not thy wife; so shalt thou be once more in Holy Russia, so shalt thou behold the white world and the fair sun. But if thou kiss her, never more shalt thou behold the white world, but shalt abide for ever in the blue sea."

So Sadko let the first three hundred maidens pass, and likewise the second, and of the third he chose the last of all, the maiden called Chernava.[1]

Then the Tzar Morskoi made him a great feast; and afterwards Sadko lay down and fell into a heavy sleep. And when he awoke, he found himself on the steep banks of the Chernava river.

[1] Black-visaged.

And as he gazed, behold, his dark-red ships came speeding up the Volkof, and his brave body-guard were thinking of Sadko under the blue sea. When also his brave troop beheld Sadko standing upon the steep bank, they marvelled; for they had left him on the blue sea, and lo! he had returned to his city before them.

Then they all rejoiced greatly, and greeted Sadko, and went to his palace. There he greeted his young wife; and after that, he unloaded his scarlet ships, and built a church to St. Mikola, and another to the very holy mother of God, and began to pray the Lord to forgive his sins.

And thenceforth he sailed no more upon the blue sea, but dwelt and took his ease in his own town.

APPENDIX

The Alatyr Stone

THIS stone, so often referred to in Russian song and legend, is elektron, amber, the precious merchandise of the first Phœnician traders, and of their successors, the Greeks and Romans. From very ancient times it has been found on the Baltic, where it still abounds on the whole southern shore, from Copenhagen to Courland. The Slavs inhabited these shores at the date of their first appearance in history, and it is in those portions of Russia which border on this sea, or whose inhabitants traded on it in early times, that the most vivid images and epithets applied to the Alatyr stone are still preserved. In ancient times also, the name of the Baltic among the Slavs was the "Latyr Sea." As amber was esteemed not only for its beauty, but as a medicine, it was worn as a protection to the throat, chest, and the whole body. Numerous spells and charms attest this fact.

It is generally spoken of as situated on the "Ocean-Sea," the "Blue Sea," or the "Island of Buyan"; and it is called "white and burning," or "cold." *White* refers to its brilliance, as in the case of the "white day." *Burning* is the epithet applied to it in the frozen North, while *cold* is the favourite epithet in the South.

According to the popular notion, the Ocean is the source of all rivers; on this Ocean lies Alatyr which is healing;—hence, from beneath this stone proceed all rivers, and all healing.

The sea in which it lies varies with the locality in which the song is sung or the legend narrated. As all

interests of the Arkhangel government centre in the White Sea, there lies the Alatyr stone. For the dwellers in the South, it is situated in the Black or Caspian Sea, while far inland it becomes synonymous with a boundary stone, and as such figures at cross-roads and so forth.

As Christianity spread, and the *stiks* or religious songs developed, the Alatyr stone acquired a new meaning. It became the stone on which Christ was crucified, and through which his blood trickled upon the head of Adam, and of all born on earth. Pilgrims returning from Jerusalem declared it to be the source of all healing, spiritual gifts, and new life. It is also said to be the stone from which Christ preached, despatched his disciples, and distributed *books* to all the world.

Volgá Vseslavich

VOLK or Volgá Vseslavich, corrupted from Svyatoslavich, is the Prince Oleg (*Olg*, *Volg*, *Volgá*) who succeeded Rurik early in the tenth century. Though this *bylina* undoubtedly preserves a dim memory of the Vseslavich of the Chronicles and the "Word of Igor's Expedition," most of Volgá's traits are purely mythical. His name of *Volk* (the Wizard) corresponds to that won by Prince Oleg through his knowledge of the Black Art—*vyetchi*, the Wise Man, or Sorcerer. The history of Oleg in the Chronicle of Nestor, a monk of Kief, 1050–1114, is almost as fantastic as the *bylina*. Like Volgá, he made a trip to "the Turkish Land," in 907. On this expedition, he is said to have placed wheels under his ships, and spreading their canvas, to have sailed thus across the plains of Thrace to the gates of Constantinople. The two heroes also begin their military career at the same age.

In the songs of the Turkish tribes of Siberia, the figure of the sorcerer and hunter who catches game and feeds his followers is very common, these peoples being still in the shepherd and hunter stage of civilization.

The signs and wonders accompanying Volgá's birth have their parallel in many other mythologies. Similar omens preceded the incarnation of Vishnu and the birth of Indra the Thunderer and Lightning-bringer.

A similar disturbing approach of the Thunder-god must be taken for granted in all epic accounts of marvellously born heroes. The omens are also often

appropriated for the use of historical characters in the legends which crystallize about striking individualities, as in the case of Alexander of Macedon.

The dragon father in these myths is the Thunder-god; for the clouds, in which primitive man saw dragons,—the robbers of the living water, and of the gold of the sun's rays,—were regarded also as an external covering, a garment or cloak, in which the bright gods and goddesses wrapped themselves. Enveloping themselves thus in their cloudy garment, the gods clothed themselves, as it were, in a dragon's skin, and assumed the monstrous dragon form. The Thunder-god, slumbering within the frost-fettered clouds, invisible until the spring in the radiance of his beauty, the lightning, transformed himself into a dragon. All Volgá's transformations refer, therefore, to changes in the shape of the rain-bearing thunder-cloud.

As the representative of sorcery, Volgá holds the place in Slavic epics, held by Maugis or Malagis in the Carlovingian epos, especially in *Renaud de Montauban.*

Thirty is the favourite epic number for the body-guard (*druzhina*). In the *Chanson de Roland*, for instance, Roland's guard at the court of Charlemagne numbers thirty, while the traitor Ganelon is defended by the same number of relatives. As the ancient Slavs had no other organization than that of the patriarchal commune, this idea would seem to have been borrowed from the Scandinavians. The tests for admission to these brotherhoods, and the manner of their formation among the latter people, are well known. Princes, bishops, and even wealthy private individuals, like Churilo and Sadko, had these guards, which owed allegiance to no one but their leader.

Volgá and Mikula

MIKULA represents the intermediate stage between the embodiment of purely physical and of moral power—the stage between Svyatogor and Ilya. He partakes of Ilya's nature, as the Thunder-god, and his nightingale mare signifies, probably, the thunder-cloud. The assistance rendered to agriculture through the rain by the Thunder-deity led in course of time to his being regarded as the god of agriculture also, who opened the plains of heaven with his whirlwinds, ploughed them with his lightning darts, and scattered his seed broadcast over them.

The dependence of man on the seasons early suggested the idea that the gods had set the example of ploughing. Many ceremonies and traditions are preserved in various countries, which point to such a mythical significance of the plough. The Siamese, for instance, celebrate a festival in its honour, of Buddhistic origin.

Herodotus, in his description of the customs and beliefs of the ancient Scythians, the ancestors of the Slavs, gives a tradition of a plough which fell from heaven in supernatural wise. With the possession of this plough and of a golden axe, yoke, and cup which had also fallen from heaven, went the imperial power. It may safely be affirmed, that the tradition of the golden implements of agriculture proceeding from heaven comes down to us from the most remote antiquity.—The Russian peasant still sees the plough which Mikula hurled heavenward, in the constellation of Orion.

Mikula, like Ilya, is a glorification of the peasant. Some of the Germanic chieftains were prevented from accepting Christianity, by the thought that they should be obliged to enjoy heaven in the mixed society of common people, and even of slaves. On the other hand, Slavic traditions all represent the princely powers as derived from simple tillers of the soil; and in the Bohemian Chronicle of Kosma of Prague, dating from the twelfth century, it is asserted that "we are all made equal by nature" (*Quia facti sumus omnes æquales per naturam*)—a characteristically Slavic utterance in the midst of feudal Europe.

St. Nicholas, always called *Mikola*, has taken Mikula's place as the Christian deity of agriculture, and is a very great favourite among the peasant brethren of the "Villager's Son."

The affair of the bridge strongly resembles one at the bridge of Ovrukh, related in the Chronicles, where perished Oleg Svyatoslavich—the Volgá Vseslavich of the epic song.

Svyatogor

SVYATOGOR was the last of the Elder Heroes, that is to say, of the prehistoric, purely mythical giants of the cycle preceding the Vladimirian. The only songs belonging to this cycle which have come down to us are those relating to Volgá, Mikula, Svyatogor, and the "One and Forty Pilgrims," who are thought to be nameless heroes belonging to that epoch. One or two others are slightly mentioned, as will be seen in "Ilya and the Idol," where Ivaniusho is a representative of the older race. Syvatogor's name is derived from his dwelling in the Holy Mountains (*na svyatyk gorakh*), but what these Holy Mountains represent on earth is not known. Mythologically considered, they are the clouds. Hilferding found one very good rhapsodist who persisted in using the name *Svyatopolk*, on the usual ground, that "it was sung so." This suggested to Hilferding that Svyatogor might be identical with the giant of that name from Great Moravia—a legendary hero, and the representative of Slavic might. The Chronicle of Kosma of Prague states that Svyatopolk concealed himself in the mountains, and there died a mysterious death. Svyatopolk also, like Svyatogor, was the only giant hero who did not war against Holy Russia.

The adventure with the pouches is often credited to "Hero Samson," Mikula being replaced by two angels sent by the Lord to rebuke the hero's arrogance.

A boast similar to that of Svyatogor was attributed to Alexander of Macedon in the manuscript legends of

him which reached Russia from Byzantium in very early times.

The "Elder Heroes" make way for the Younger, typified in Ilya, as the Titans made way for the Gods in Greek, or the Jotuns for the Asa in Norse mythology. The Younger Heroes superseded the Elder when men became convinced that in the battle constantly waged between light and darkness, summer and winter, light and summer always conquered at last. The distinction between the Elder and Younger Heroes has ceased to exist among the people, who regard them merely as representatives of different kinds of heroic, not divine, forces.

Svyatogor, the giant cloud-mountain, dies, *i. e.* becomes fettered with cold, and falls into his winter sleep. Popular fancy has likened the action of the frost to bands of iron, upon the frozen, stone-like earth. Svyatogor's huge sword, the lightning, which in spring and summer parts the heavens, prepares during the heavy autumnal storms the iron bands which the cold hand of winter lays upon the cloud.

Svyatogor's father belongs to the same class of easily tricked giants as Polyphemus. Instances, almost exactly similar, of the substitution of iron for the giant to grasp, are to be found in modern Greek and Swedish legends, and in the eleventh book of the Mahabharata. The crystal casket in which the hero carries his wife suggests an incident in one of the tales contained in the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments.*

Ilya of Murom

NO one of the heroes has left so many proofs of his existence, no one is so popular or so firmly believed in, as the great peasant hero Ilya of Murom. A race of peasants called Ilya's peasants (*krestyanye Iliushini*) regard themselves as direct descendants of the renowned *bogatyr ;* and it is a noteworthy fact, that, according to local testimony, the people who inhabit the primeval forests of Murom are celebrated for their great stature and strength. To this day, the peasants of the village of Karacharof, Ilya's birthplace, point out a chapel built upon the spot where a fountain burst forth beneath the hoofs of Ilya's good steed Cloudfall, as did the springs at a blow from the hoof of Pegasus. The chapel is dedicated to Ilya the Prophet; and "to the fountain fierce bears still come to quaff the waters and gain heroic strength," so the legend runs.

He is bound up with the religious legends of Kief. Erich Lassota of Steblau, who made a trip to Kief in 1594, states in his diary that he saw in a chapel of St. Sophia the tomb, now destroyed, of "Elia Morowlin, a distinguished hero and bohater," and of another hero; and Kalnoforsky, a Pole, in a book published in 1638, says that Ilya lived about 1188. His portrait was published in the seventeenth century among the saints of Kief, with an inscription to the effect that his body was still uncorrupted—which corresponds to the statement in the epic poems, that he was turned to stone.

In this portrait he appears as a gaunt ascetic, with masses of hair and beard, barely covered with his

mantle, and with hands outstretched. One of the rhapsodists who sang the lay of the heroes' end to Hilferding in 1870, said that he knew Ilya was turned to stone in Kief, because some people had once made a pilgrimage thither to see how his fingers were placed for the sign of the cross—great importance being attached to this point. They saw Ilya, but his hand was broken, and the question remained unsettled.

The antiquity of the legends about Ilya is shown by the mention of his name in the cycle of *Dietrich of Berne*, which was compiled in the thirteenth century from songs already existing. He appears as the brother of the Russian King Voldemar, Ilya the Greek, referring to his religion, or in the Russian form of *Ilias* von Riuzen; the German would be *Elias*. His exploits in *Dietrich of Berne* have, however, nothing to do with those attributed to Ilya in the epic songs.

Notwithstanding all this tolerably strong evidence of his actual existence, Ilya is a purely mythical personage, an incarnation of the Thunder-god, the successor of heathen Perun. In the Christian mythology of the peasants, he appears as "Ilya (Elijah) the Prophet," probably on account of the fiery chariot in which Elijah was translated to heaven. The mythical allusions are confined to a very restricted circle of natural phenomena—the clear heaven, the lightning, the rain, the thunder-clouds, and the powers of darkness in general. Like Thor and Indra, he wages incessant battle against the evil powers, and there are few episodes in his career to which a parallel does not exist among the various Indo-European races.

One of the most widely disseminated of traditions is that concerning the tardy development of the hero's strength, his late entrance upon active life, or long obscurity under persecution or in exile. Cinderella (Slavic *Popeliuga*), and the youngest of three Princes who carries everything before him at last, after years of ridicule or ill-treatment from his brothers, are some of the best known. It is hinted that the renowned Siegfried passed his youth in obscurity, as Ilya sat for

thirty years upon the oven. All these legends refer to the absence of the Thunder-deity in winter.

The wandering psalm-singers who heal Ilya, and bestow upon him his vast strength, are the rain-bearing clouds, and their miraculous draught the life-giving dew. The hero and his horse are but two myths of the same phenomenon, originally independent, and only combined at a much later epoch.

In the riddles of which the people are so fond, the horse signifies the wind, and his neigh is the thunder.

Another embodiment of the whirlwind is Nightingale the Robber, whose historical prototype is supposed to be the Mogut, pardoned by Vladimir. The whirlwind chases the dark clouds through the heavens, and obscures the sunlight, *i. e.* bars the road to Fair Sun Vladimir,—troubles the sea with its whistle and roar, and uproots century-old oaks, like the giant Hraesvelgr in the Elder Edda, who sits on the border of heaven in eagle's plumage, and by the flapping of his wings produces the tempest.

The supernatural birds with iron feathers which Hercules drove from the Stymphalian swamp, one of whom was named Aella (the whirlwind), and the two storm-birds of the Ramayana, who by waving their wings shake the mountains, raise great billows in the sea, and overthrow trees, are also forms of the same myth. In Latin also, *aquila* and *vultur* furnish names for stormy winds, *aquilo* and *vulturnus*. The Smorodina is a mythical river—the rain; and the bridge built by Ilya is the rainbow.

In his contest with Falcon the Hunter, Ilya represents the heavens, Falcon being the lightning which turns its sharp blade against its mother from the realms of darkness, the clouds. To this lightning Ilya opposes his own, and having conquered shines forth again clear and radiant. Falcon's mace cast heavenward, and returning always to his hand, is the lightning flash.

The Russian examples of the very common legend concerning the conflict of father and son are remark-

able for their number and variety; some versions substitute Ilya's daughter,[1] a "bold *polyanitza*," for Falcon; most of them have preserved their tragic ending.

Idol, like the robbers and the Tatars who effaced, in course of time, the memory of the tribes who really warred against Vladimir, must be accepted as another embodiment of the dark and hostile principle. The gluttony ascribed to him constitutes a sort of distinction in a great number of legends. In ancient Hindoo myths, it appears to be the special attribute of the evil powers. Thor in the Edda and Indra in the Rig-Veda are credited with a great capacity for drinking, and Ilya is represented as intoxicated. Owing to his connection with the rain, drunkenness is the special attribute of the Thunder-god.

Ilya's conduct in his quarrels with Vladimir is much more moderate than that of many epic heroes in disputes with their sovereigns. The paladins of Charlemagne's court pulled the Emperor's beard, beat him, and called him a fool, with the same readiness which they displayed in humiliating themselves before him and kissing his footsteps when circumstances rendered it advisable.

Many epic personages disappear from the scene in a mysterious manner which renders their death uncertain, their return probable at any moment. Then arises the legend of their return on the fulfilment of certain conditions, as in the case of Frederic Barbarossa. As the Russian heroes were known to have been killed in battle or turned to stone, with Ilya's tomb in two or three places in Kief to prove his death in particular, this legend has become the special property of Stenka Razin, the famous Cossack chief of the seventeenth century, and his return is still awaited by the peasants.

A fragmentary *bylina* represents Ilya, Dobrynya, and other heroes as sailing in the "Falcon ship," to some unknown region, whence they do not return.

[1] Several heroes decline to fight her, because they doubt their ability to conquer her.

The Fair Sun Prince Vladimir

TWO noted historical personages are combined in the courteous Prince Vladimir of the *bylinas*—Saint Vladimir Svyatoslavich, who established Christianity in Russia in the year 988, and died in 1015; and Vladimir Monomachus, who was born in 1053, and died in 1125. Both are celebrated in the Chronicles for their feasts, and the latter's courtesy is frequently referred to. His name Vladimir, *Vladyki-Miri*, Ruler of the World, chances to express his most ancient mythical signification. His peculiar title, "*Fair Sun*," renders it even more apparent. It has taken the place in Russian tradition of the most ancient name of the divinity of the heavens and the Sun. If not identical with the Volos[1] of the Chronicles, it stands at least in close philological relationship with him, and with the Semitic Baal or Bel.

He does not represent the active principle of light and warmth, however, but the passive. He paces his banquet hall, the heavens, and serves his guests with wine, but relegates all active duties to his heroes. His distinctive appellation is *courteous*, as *good* is that of French and Spanish epic kings (*le bon roy*, *el buen rey*), or of King Arthur. But as the Sun can be not only clear or courteous, but burning and oppressive, so Vladimir is, on occasion, both oppressive and discour-

[1] St. Vlasy (Blasius) in the Christian calendar. For some account of the ceremonial songs connected with this patron saint of flocks and herds, see Ralston's *Songs of the Russian People* (p. 251).

teous, as these songs show. In one omitted here, Prince Vladimir despatches young Sukman Odikmantievich to shoot game for his table. Sukman finds none, but destroys an innumerable host of Tatars. When he reports to Vladimir on his return, the Prince does not believe him, orders him to be thrown into a dungeon, and sends heroes to examine into the truth of the story. Convinced at last, he releases Sukman, who kills himself for grief at his prince's treatment.

Many marriages of heroes are mentioned in these epic songs besides Vladimir's, and in the epics of other nations marriage is a frequent topic. Students of comparative mythology are agreed in regarding these marriages as variations of the same theme; viz. the union of a bright and beneficent male principle with an obscure and noxious female principle, taken from the realm of darkness.

Quiet Dunaï Ivanovich

DUNAÏ is the name borne by one of Prince Vladimir Vasilkovich's voevodes, and is mentioned in the Chronicles of the years 1281 and 1287. Like Mikailo he was a rover, and probably not a Russian.

Geographical accuracy is not to be looked for in these epic lays. Dunaï and Nastasya, as rivers, bear various names, and their courses are as fantastic as in the version selected.

Stavr Godinovich

STAVR, whom we meet with in the Chronicle of Novgorod in the year 1118, was not a *boyar*, as stated in the songs, but a *sotsky*,—the ruler of a hundred; Novgorod and its suburbs being divided into hundreds according to their different trades. The courteous Prince was Vladimir Monomachus, who summoned all the nobles of Novgorod to Kief, and made them take an oath of allegiance to him. Some he permitted to return home; others, among them Stavr, he sent into exile in wrath at some of their exploits.

Ryabinin, one of the best of epic singers, explained Vasilisa's easy victory over Vladimir's heroes, by saying that Ilya of Murom had not arrived in Kief at that time. Consequently, as a daughter of Mikula, a representative of the Earth and the Elder Heroes, she was superior to all the Younger Heroes.

Such wrestling and shooting matches were not uncommon at feasts, as the Ipatief Chronicle of 1150 informs us, and even horse-racing, as in the song of "Ivan the Merchant's Son."

Bold Alyosha Popovich

SEVERAL references are made to Alyosha in various Chronicles, under the name of Alexander Popovich. The most important, from the Nikonof Chronicle of the year 1224, states that "Alexander Popovich with his servant Torop" (*Akim* of the song), "Dobrynya Golden Belt of Ryazan, and seventy great and brave bogatyrs were slain in the battle of Kalka, by the Tatars, through the wrath of God at our sins."

This is the famous battle described in "Ilya Muromets and Tzar Kalin," where Russian chivalry perished.

What relation the character of the Alyosha of epic song bears to that of the actual historical personage, it is impossible, with our meagre information, to decide. It is probable, however, that his name of Popovich, *pope's* (priest's) *son*, determined the characteristics of the epic hero, rather than his personal traits.—Numerous tales (*skazkas*) [1] bear witness to the unpopularity of priests and their relatives in Russia. His language and deeds in some short poems justify Dobrynya's description of him as a scorner of women in "Dobrynya and Alyosha." He bears some resemblance to the Loki of Northern mythology, the mischief-maker.

An incantation, "The Patrol of the Flocks," mentions among evil spirits, wild beasts, and other noxious

[1] See Ralston's *Russian Folk-lore*, p. 351.

influences to be guarded against, "popes and their popesses, monks, nuns," and so forth.

Tugarin, adapted from Tugar-Khan, is the spirit of the storm, the fire-flashing cloud, one of the dragons combated by Dobrynya as well as by Alyosha.

Dobrynya the Dragon-Slayer

TWO historical Dobrynyas are united in the person of this hero. The first, mentioned in the Chronicles towards the end of the tenth century, was uncle to Prince (Saint) Vladimir, and brother to Malusha, the housekeeper (*kliuchnitza*) of the Princess Olga, Vladimir's mother. In the *bylinas* he becomes Vladimir's nephew and steward (*kliuchnik*).

The second, Dobrynya of Ryazan, surnamed "Golden Belt," was a hero who perished in the battle of Kalka in 1224.

Marina is to a certain degree an historical reminiscence of the heretic, Polish wife of the False Dmitry, Marina Mnishek. It is evident that her name must have superseded the original one in the seventeenth century. That name was in earlier times probably "Marya the White Swan," as her character is identical with those of the treacherous wives of Mikailo the Rover, and Ivan Godinovich: in some versions of the latter she is called Marya instead of Avdotya. *Mora* or *Morena*, the goddess of serpents, death, sleep, and cold, was no doubt the original heroine.

Marina Mnishek, like the Marina of the song, was reputed a witch among the common people, and like her the latter is sometimes designated as the "heretic." This Slavic Circe typifies the dark and hurtful female principle which is united to a bright and beneficent male principle.

It often happens in mythology, that one deity is divided into two or more distinct persons, in accord-

ance with his various attributes. This is the case here. While Vladimir is the passive, inactive principle of the Sun, and pursues his way tranquilly through the sky, the active, warlike principle is embodied in Dobrynya.

Dobrynya wages incessant war with darkness, triumphing over it every morning, and with winter, whose fetters he strikes asunder every spring with the sword of his rays. Like Krishna, Apollo, Hercules, Frey, Siegfried, and Yegory the Brave, the St. George of the religious ballads, he is a slayer of dragons; like Perseus and Yegory, he rescues captive women.

He possesses traits in common with Ilya, also. For the Sun-god and the Thunder-god are both descendants of *Svarog*, the Heaven, the father of all gods. Hence their brotherhood in arms was originally a mythical bond. Dobrynya corresponds to Odin, Ilya to Thor, in Northern mythology.

The marriage round the bush is undoubtedly the ancient heathen rite against which early Russian writers inveigh.

Dobrynya's long absence from Nastasya, the Russian Penelope, has the same mythical signification as Mikailo Rover's imprisonment in the stone, or Ilya's long confinement to the oven—the night and winter repose of the deities of light and warmth. Dobrynya's transformation into an aurochs likewise represents the obscuration of the beneficent summer deities in winter, and his golden horns are an intimation of his bright origin.

These Russian poems treating of the return of the long-absent husband are more complete and perfect in form, and, from an epic point of view, more original, than either the oral traditions of Western Europe which are chiefly in prose, or than the literary versions which go back to the thirteenth century.

Ivan Godinovich

PULLING off the bridegroom's boots, in token of wifely submission, was one of the ceremonies which were regularly performed after a wedding. Apparently, in the oldest versions of this song, Avdotya's refusal to pull off Ivan's boot was the direct cause of her death.

Ivan's experience with Avdotya the White Swan is supposed to reflect that of Prince Vladimir with Rognyeda, daughter of Rogvolod, Prince of the Polotzki. "I will not marry the son of a slave," she said, in answer to Vladimir's proposal of marriage, and prepared to wed his half-brother Yaropolk. Koschei represents Yaropolk. This was in allusion to Vladimir's mother, who had been a servant of his grandmother. Vladimir slew Rogvolod and Yaropolk, and forced Rognyeda to wed him.

After several years, so runs the legend, Rognyeda attempted to kill Vladimir in his sleep, by way of avenging her father's death and her own wrongs. Vladimir woke, and seized her hand as she held the dagger over him. Then he ordered her to dress herself in her wedding garments, and wait for him, intending to kill her with his own hand. But she put a sword into the hands of her little son, and bade him greet his father with the words: "Father, thou thinkest that thou art alone here!" Touched by the sight of his son, Vladimir summoned his boyars, and begged them to judge the matter. On their advice, he sent Rognyeda and her son back to her native land. Her

descendants thenceforth reigned over the Polotzki, and warred against the descendants of Vladimir by other wives.

Ivan's wooing, as well as Dunaï's wooing for Prince Vladimir, furnishes a picture of that rough, forceful manner of courtship which prevailed in the old patriarchal days. The memory of it is preserved in a great many wedding songs, which represent the bride as purchased or stolen away by an entire stranger. There is a striking likeness between the birds which surround Avdotya and the two peacocks which hover over the head of Hilda in *Dietrich of Berne*. This is a very ancient trait, pointing to a supernatural being.

Churilo Plenkovich

CHURILO'S name does not appear in any of the old Chronicles.

The epithet applied to old Penko, *surozhanin*, indicates his business of silk-merchant or trader on the *Surog* Sea—the Sea of Azof. Another explanation professes to include Churilo's mythical significance, by deriving the term from the same Sanskrit root as *Svarog*, the Slavic Saturn.

The numerous attendants credited to Prince Vladimir belong to the Moscow epoch, and present a strange contrast to the plainness and simplicity of the court of Kief. Churilo met his death at the hands of an enraged husband, the Bermyag mentioned in the song.

Diuk Stepanovich

DIUK'S unflattering description of the lack of elegance at Kief is confirmed by an ancient account of one of Saint Vladimir's feasts. This narrative of the year 996 says that there was a great abundance of all sorts of food, flesh of domestic and wild animals. But "when the guests had drunk freely, they began to murmur against the Prince, and to say: 'Woe be upon our heads! for we are given wooden spoons to eat with and not silver.' Vladimir heard them, and commanded silver spoons to be brought, for he loved his druzhina, and reflected that a good body-guard might acquire silver and gold, but could never be purchased by either."

Nevertheless, Burhard, the ambassador of the Emperor Henry IV at the court of Svyatoslaf in 1075, was amazed at the quantity and magnificence of the treasures he saw there.

In the same manuscript with the "Word of Igor's Expedition," of the twelfth century, was found an "Epistle from Tzar Ivan the Indian to Tzar Manuel the Greek," which reads as follows: "If thou desirest to know all my power, and all the wonders of my Indian realm, sell thy kingdom of Greece and purchase paper, and come to my Indian realm with thy learned men, and I will permit thee to write down the marvels of the Indian land; and thou shalt not be able to make a writing of the wonders of my kingdom before the departure of thy spirit."

Which of these two fictions, the epic poem and the epistle, is derived from the other, it is impossible to say.

Vasily the Drunkard and Tzar Batyg

THIS song resembles an episode narrated in the Chronicles, which has been idealized and transferred to the favourite epoch of Vladimir, and the siege of Kief by Batyg in 1240.

In 1381, Toktamysh besieged Moscow. "Taken unawares," says the Chronicle, "and deprived of all power of defending themselves, nearly all the inhabitants gave themselves over to drunkenness. A few, however, fought the enemy from the city wall, among them a certain cloth-dealer, Adam by name, who shot an arrow from the Frolof gate, and slew one of the horde, a son, and a person of distinction, causing thereby great grief to Tzar Toktamysh, and to all his princes."

Sweet Mikailo Ivanovich the Rover

IN some versions of this poem, Marya the White Swan is the Dragon of the under-world, transforming herself into that shape in the coffin, in order to kill Mikailo. This malicious view is the one adopted in many legends and tales; Mikailo cuts his bride in bits, when he discovers her character, cleans out the snakes and other reptiles concealed within her body, sprinkles her with the living water, marries her, and lives happily ever after.

In the myth, the White Swan signifies a cloud : the living water is the rain. The dragon is, as usual, a cloud, but larger and darker than the first. Mikailo's roaring in the grave is the thunder, and the bursting of the coffin denotes the bursting of the cloud.

Mikailo's candles are the lightning. His wife not only denotes a single cloud, but the cloudiness common in summer, which is capable of entering into beneficent union with the thunder and lightning, but in winter remains sterile in the heaven, and, dying with idleness, conceals within itself, as though entombed, the Thunder-power, its husband. For it appears that Mikailo's mythical foundation is the same as that of Ilya of Murom, and of Dunaï also, to a certain extent.

Mikailo's rods and pincers point him out as the heavenly smith, the forger of the lightning, which is represented by those weapons. A corresponding instance of double burial in case of death, as a condition of marriage, and of the visit of a serpent to the grave, is found in a German tale (Grimm, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*). Mikailo sometimes appears as the leader of the " One and Forty Pilgrims " instead of Kasyan.

Nightingale Budimirovich

ALL authorities are agreed as to the foreign element in Nightingale Budimirovich. He was not a hero of Kief. Some regard him as a Norman pirate, others as one of the prehistoric Slavs who dwelt on the shores of the Baltic. The "land of Ledenetz," or *Vedenetz* as it appears in some variants, has led to the suggestion that he was a merchant from Venice, or one of the Italian architects who came to Russia in the twelfth century.

One variant represents Nightingale's mother as opposed to the marriage until her son has proved himself in a long voyage. During his absence, young David Popof arrives, and, stating that he had seen Nightingale imprisoned for smuggling in Ledenetz, seeks Love's hand in marriage. Nightingale returns in time to claim his bride at the wedding feast. The incident, and the treacherous suitor's name, recall the story of Alyosha and Nastasya.

Nightingale Budimirovich's mythical signification is probably the reverse of that of Nightingale the Robber. They represent the opposite sides of the same atmospheric phenomenon; the Robber being the rude and boisterous gales, while fair Love's wooer is the breeze, gentle and seductive as a minstrel.

The description of his ships recalls the famous dragon ships of the ancient Scandinavians. An Eastern tale describes the ceiling of a rich man's house as "covered with figures of all sorts of wild beasts, sea-monsters, and fishes. When the wind blew, they moved about, and were reflected in the floor." This exaggerated description of bas-reliefs explains

the decoration of Nightingale's bower with sables, and so forth. Nightingale is not an historical character. His palace suggests that of Aladdin.

Tzar Solomon and Tzaritza Solomonida

AMONG the traditions common to all Aryan races, the quest of a bride in a marvellous ship, with the aid of wondrous song or music, is one of the most widely disseminated. This legend seems to have reached the Russians through the medium of books, as it is recorded in some of the Chronicles, though not the most ancient. It received its present poetical form from the people, and offers a very rare and noteworthy example of a poem purely popular in style, though derived from foreign and literary sources.

In one version, Tzar Vasily lives in Novgorod, and Solomon in Tzargrad (Constantinople).

Vasily Buslaevich

THIS doughty hero, a representative of the nobility and, as some think, of the *ushkuiniki*, the noted river-pirates, was a contemporary of Sadko. Only one mention is made of him in the Chronicles: his death is recorded in 1171. As this was considered worthy of record amid events of the greatest moment, some idea may be formed of his importance. He was, in fact, a *posadnik*,—lord mayor or president of the popular assembly.

It has been suggested that the "black-visaged maid" is identical with the Iris of Greek mythology. The fact that she had an arched yoke, and that she was in the service of Avdotya Vasilievna, forms the foundation for the comparison with Iris's rainbow and position as handmaid to Juno.

Merchant Sadko the Rich Guest of Novgorod

THE hero of this poem, whose adventure with the fish of Lake Ilmen is suggestive of the Arabian Nights, and whose later experience with the Tzar Morskoi recalls Jonah, or Arion in Greek mythology, is not a purely imaginary being.

The Chronicles state that he founded a church in Novgorod, though they differ as to the particular edifice. He probably lived in the twelfth century, and in the song preserves the type of the great traders of that Venice of the North in the middle ages, Novgorod the Great.

He must have been a prominent figure in his day, for frequent reference is made to him in the Chronicles, in connection with the church which he built, for about two hundred years.

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